How I Posed As a Man for Eight Years

MIDNIGHT

Sept. 16, 1922

A Macfadden Publication

10¢

When Andrew Carnegie Saved My Skin

The Girl who Paid $15,000 for Me

$500.00 in Prizes for Thrilling Midnight Adventures

Thousands of Midnight Thrills!

YES, literally thousands of midnight thrillers are pouring in. It seems every man, woman and child in the United States has had something thrilling happen at midnight—and they all want to tell the Thrill Editor about it.

Now eighteen of these thrillers are going to win a prize. Some one is going to walk off with two hundred and fifty dollars, others are going to win substantial cash-prizes—and, all in all, the contest is going to thrill the readers of MIDNIGHT as it thrills the editor.

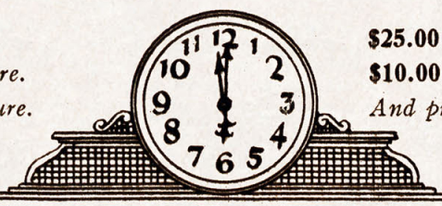
On page 12, of this issue of MIDNIGHT, we are printing a few of the most thrilling entries up to date. We do not claim that there are not others as thrilling; we are not saying that they will win a prize—but there they are, selected from the bunch, and they are worth reading we can tell you.

Now— if you haven't contributed your thriller—go to it!

And remember, three hundred words or less.

Other details and conditions of the contest appear below.

$250.00 *for the best adventure.*
$100.00 *for the next best adventure.*
$ 50.00 *for the third best adventure.*



$25.00 *for the fourth best adventure.*
$10.00 *for the fifth best adventure.*
And prizes of **$5.00** *each for the* **13** *next best adventures.*

This competition is open to everyone, except employees of MIDNIGHT and their families.

In the event of a tie for any of the prizes, each tying contestant will receive the full amount of the prize tied for.

Literary excellence will not be a factor. Only the merit of the adventure from the standpoint of its being thrilling is all that counts.

The prize winning adventures will all be published in MIDNIGHT, and those we publish which do not win prizes, will be paid for at our regular rates for stories.

You may send in as many stories as you like, providing each covers a different adventure.

The contest begins at once and will close on October 14th, 1922. The winners will be announced in the November 11th issue of MIDNIGHT.

Address your stories, or any questions about the contest, to the THRILL EDITOR, MIDNIGHT, 119 West 40th Street, New York City.

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VOLUME 1
NUMBER 5

The Pathway to Hell

by BERNARR MACFADDEN

THE primrose path is said to be lined with good intentions. It may be lined with roses—in places.

Many might recommend this path "while the going is good." But the thorns will soon prickle. Roses and thorns grown on the same bush. Misery and delight are often closely allied.

The primrose path leads into the seething recesses of dissipation.

It is a case of getting all there is out of life as quickly as you can. You are supposed to wring the sponge dry. Take all you are capable of enjoying at one time.

To hell with tomorrow. Today is the thought in view.

Drain the cup of happiness to its very bottom. Kick out the bottom and look for more, is the attitude of many.

If you want to live your life quickly, if you want to get through on a lightning express train, the idea is good.

For the primrose path has the right-of-way for quick service. Night or day makes no difference. You can go straight on, often without stops, to the sepulchral greeting that meets you at the cemetery.

There may be times when you have to slow up. You cannot break the law of life without penalties here and there. Pain that is sometimes agony to soul and body will meet you by the wayside. It may scorch you as would a red-hot iron until you writhe in anguish.

But you are paying the penalty. It is the bill you owe to Life for your sins of omission and commission.

Some people worry so much about the punishment they may have to endure in the realm of Mephistopheles. Why, there is plenty of hell right here. You may miss the pangs in your early youth, but as the years creep on the Satanic realm will begin to encompass you, and long before you pass away into the mysterious world from which no one has ever come back, you will experience the tortures of a mis-used life that may make you believe that Satan has changed his place of residence.

The primrose path may bring you a few delightful moments. It may thrill you at times with joy so exquisite that heaven may seem to have descended upon you.

But in the end you will pay the price.

An early death is the lowest price. There are gradations in value all the way along the route.

See that man crippled with rheumatism. He hobbles along, his face contorted with pain. Here is a case of locomotor ataxia. He can still walk but his movements are machine-like. His face is hardened from constant suffering.

And there is the man with paresis. His brain is gone. He is a human derelict, alive in body but dead in mind. A lost soul.

This dreadful path leads by the most direct route to diseases that taint every drop of blood in your body. For thousands of years mankind has suffered through the inheritances that have come from generation to generation, as a result of this search for the abnormal pleasures associated with an immoral life.

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How I got away with it!

Editorial Note.—This girl's adventures kept her out of school. Consequently she was up against it when it came to actually writing her own story. In order to get every ounce of its gripping realism we furnished her with an expert stenographer, who was instructed to spell every word as she pronounced it. The following story with its punchy slang and gangster flavor was the verbatim result.

HULLY Gee!

Steppin' into a pair of pants an' bummin' round wid fellers aint nothin' to blow about. Lots a' other janes an' wimmen's pulled de stunt, an' got away wid it clean.

Naw sir!

It aint puttin' on the jeans and playin' feller. Not by a helluva sight. It's bein' able ter fool de gang, like I did when we usta swim de Delaware. Or, when de gang hung out all night and bunked like sardines in a tin box.

Dat's what counts. If you can git away wid them kinda stunts you better dish de skirts an turn into a feller damn quick, cause take it from me, fellers git all de cream in life. Girls don't git nothin' but skimmed milk, and half the time it gits sour 'fore goin' down.

Girls is all a bunch of blind dumb-bells. Dey oughta git wise ter demselves, for hittin' on one cylinder while de fellers is speedin' along on all six, just like a bunch of lilies hangin' round waitin' ter be grabbed up. Dat's wimmen fer you. Easy pickins, I'm tellin' yer.

Don't try ter shut me up. I know what I'm talkin' 'bout. Girls show a different front ter fellers from what they show a girl. I got hep to dat first time I drags one ter de movies.

CHEAT?

Hell, yes! Girls cheat much as fellers, only fellers got things fixed so when a girl cheats an' gits caught she's outa luck—Fellers don't pay fer cheatin'. Dey just breeze right on. I'm tellin' yer straight goods.

I'll eat a keg o' nails if my first girl sweetheart didn't tow me into court fer havin' got her into trouble. Kin yer beat dat?

Cheatin'?

I'll say she was.

An' all de time she's engaged ter me—nothin' but a girl in pants. Hully Gee! Dat was one o' the great minnits in me life. I mean when de judge says I had ter marry her. But—I'll tell yer 'bout it later when I git to it better.

Everybody wants ter know how I ever got started as a boy. Simple! I kept me eyes open all de time and I seen just how things was gonna go fer me in skirts. Hells bells, I couldn't do nothin' if I stayed a girl. Course I coulda played paper dolls and all dat junk, but when a kid wants ter shoot crap an' bum round de streets, paper dolls aint in it.

Me folks was all dead but my grandpop when I got ter be twelve, an' big enough ter want to go in pool rooms and do like fellers. Lemme tell you somethin' 'bout grandpop right now. He aint no slouch in this here world. He's a college feller himself, and comes from down North Carolina way. Had money once and been all over creation. Ever since I remember he's had a bug ter tramp 'round. Guess dat's why he didn't raise so much of a row when I turned into a boy.

We hiked considerable 'fore we landed in Philly an' settled down. I was wearin' britches den—had been fer a year. I looked so much like a feller I got to thinkin' I was one. Yer see I never was no Venus fer looks. I was hefty fer me age but there wasn't nothin' but straight lines ter me figger. I got a hair clipping once a month just like a regular feller. My hair's always been kinda reddy and straight. I'm lettin' it grow out now. But, believe me I'm all fer keepin' it bobbed.

A feller livin' in de same roomin house wid us got bummin' round wid me an' one day he ups and asks if I'd like to join his gang. I'd been itchin' fer him ter ask me so I took him up like a streak o' lightnin'.

Joinin' a tough gang aint no pipe dream. A fellers gotta be mity damn hard-boiled ter git by. Yer got to be nervy and willin' to bean a cop if he gits in de way. De gang I got in wid ran 'round in de Tenderloin District. It was DE GANG of the place. All de others was second-raters wid it. I went through all kinda tests 'fore I got in. First night I had ter fight three fellers all bigger'n me.

It's all bunk 'bout wimmin bein' weaker dan men. It's just an idea dat gits most wimmin scared. Dey take it for settled dat a feller can whip em an' dey lay down if a fist starts fer de nose.

I whipped two o' dem ginks the first night even if dey give me a black eye or two. Next stunt I had to pull was stand guard while de gang swiped a bunch o' bananas from a ginny fruit-stand. When de Dago hollered fer de cop I stuck right on de job and outrun de copper after he got dere. Next thing I knew de gang blindfolded me and led me to the Delaware River.

The leader hollered at me:

"One of de bunch is drownin' in de river. Jump in an' save him."

I couldn't swim a dam' stroke but I jumped in clothes an' all. Believe me it was stay up or go down to the mud bottom. I kicked and paddled to beat the devil and got out. Den I was one of de gang fer fair.

FROM dat minnit on I lived in der streets. Grandpop went off on some trips and left me wid a roomin' house woman. She knew better'n try ter hold me down. I did anything an' everything de other guys did. Fightin' was me best bet. Shootin' pool and tellin' the cops where ter git off came next.

Say—de coppers was after me from mornin' ter night. Every time a Dago lost fruit—every time a tobacco store got robbed of cigarettes me gang was blamed fer it all. We was always on de lookout fer de police. An' de cops was always scoutin' 'round fer us.

It wasn't long 'fore I had scrapped wit every gink in our bunch but the two leaders. What's more I'd licked 'em too. I had a way of bustin' into 'em like a female wild-cat. I used my fingernails and me feet just as well as me fists. Guess I was too wiry fer some of 'em.

All de gang chewed tobaccy—swore like sailors—drank liquor when it was floatin' 'round—shot crap—smoked to beat hell an' did everybody we could. I did just like de other fellers. You'd think some of dem birds woulda got wise ter me bein' a girl the way I went 'round wid 'em at night an' even slept wid 'em.

But dey didn't.

I went in de Delaware in broad daylight wid 'em

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by the girl who posed as a man for 8 years —

and nobody got wise. Course I didn't go in stark naked. De cops used ter watch us too much fer dat. But, I'd stand behind a box car or a tree and start to strip just like a feller.

How did I git away wid it?

I just turned me back at de right minit.

Dey was always talkin' 'bout girls. Believe me fellers like I went 'round wid said what was on their mind—Didn't waste any breath a-tall. I talked jest like 'em, so dey never got wise what was goin' on in me bean. But, I'm gittin' away from what I started to tell 'bout. I was curios 'bout boys for a while till I got usta seein' 'em. I got wise enough from hearin 'em talk to know what it's all about. In the beginnin' I could'nt figure out, bein' a girl, how I was able to look at fellers just like a feller looks at 'em. I thought I oughta feel different.

One doctor who's talked ter me lots since de court found me out ter be a woman told me I didn't have any sect impulse when I was comin' up, or else I woulda been found out mighty quick. It took me a long time ter git wise to what sect impulse meant. When I did git de drift I told the Doc where ter git off at. It was nothin' like dat with me. I wasn't no iceberg 'cause I looked like er feller and acted like one. When I got ter be sixteen and leader of me gang I had as much woman feelin's as any jane dat ever wore skirts.

BUT——

I wasn't such a dumb-bell as not ter know dat I'd spill der beans if I didn't keep on bein' a boy wid de fellers. Many's de night I rolled into a bed wid one of me gang and slept right on widout his ever knowin' he was bunking wid a girl. I never was much afraid of a feller gettin' wise like that.

What scared me lots o' times was that some jane would git hep to me because bummin' 'round like we did wid some of de girls in our huntin' grounds was likely ter git me in a tight corner.

ONE night I got caught at a gang party—and believe me I thought my goose was cooked.

I was gang leader den and goin' on sixteen years old. Most of de fellers had sweeties. I had one too. It was a good trick fer me ter work, because it made me look like a regular feller in every way. De girl I was rushin' was a nut fer lovin'—

Fact is, I'm goin' ter tell the straight goods 'bout most girls if I get crowned by some of 'em fer doin' it. Janes oughta know de truth 'bout such things. Maybe it'll keep some of 'em out of de trouble that's always waitin' fer the kid who goes wrong.

Not only was me sweetie strong fer lovin', but every girl I knew in dem days wanted her kissin' and huggin'—Kids who'd let me go a long ways wid her as a boy woulda told me, if I had been a girl, there was notin' doin' wid fellers. Dat's what I mean when I says a girl has one front fer a jane and another fer a feller. Girls is much more straight goods wid a feller than wid another girl.

Gee! A Floss is such easy pickin's fer de guy they likes. Just aint nothin' to it! A feller can git anything he wants an' in takin' it he doesn't give a rip-rapin' damn what happens—But, the poor simp of a girl catches all the hell. It's her fault for de way she's always let de fellers git away wid everything.

Ter git back to de time I almost tripped up. Rosie was some baby fer a good time, an' when we pulled a big blow-out at a woman's place Rosie and lots of de other girls decided not ter go home at all. She gits me up de third floor. I could see what was comin' on an' I gits mighty squirmy an' uneasy. I played drunk, an' made believe I was sick. But, Rosie wasn't goin' to stand fer nothin like dat. I goes in de room wid her, tellin' meself dat something's got ter happen mighty damn sudden.

Believe me, I was really beginnin' ter feel sick when her brother, one of me gang, busts in de room. He's pickled from mixin' beer and likker. So he starts in at me. Say I up an' at him like a ton o' bricks.

We mixed it right and left. Boxin' was me long suite—I side-stepped his fists pretty lively an' sent over a coupla blows that was good for a bloody nose and a black peeper. I guess we battled five minnits 'fore anybody tried ter knock us apart. Rosie was screechin' and shoutin' at de top o' her lungs—but, she dasn't git near us.

I gits an awful swipe on de jaw once but I shoved me foot into de guy's middle and paid him back all right. When some of de gang finally shoved us away from each other there was too much excitement 'round them diggin's for Rosie ter git me in any more such tight jams.

Dat's one time a jane almost got wise ter me. No—not de only time. But, I aint got nerve to tell de others. Dey'd look like hell in print. I got away wid it, so what's de odds?

Was Rosie me only sweetie?

Naw—Rosie was only one o' de many. Say, I had 'em right an' left. What's more, I took me pick of de best, bein' the leader of de gang. I told you once already I ain't no roarin' beauty as a girl, or boy, but it didn't make no difference wid girls. They took ter me cause I was de king-pin. I found out janes all like to shine wid a feller whats de high muck a muck in dis world.

Grandpop says wimmen got it all over fellers when it comes ter figgerin' things out—says wimmen's faster an' smarter upstairs—He can't understan' how I bunked de wimmen so easy—He thinks dey oughta got wise ter me sect. Well, dey musta been a string o' dumb fishes cause I gits away wid all of 'em I took out.

I'm almost fergettin' ter say I got soft meself on a guy in de gang when I was about eighteen. He was a swell looker an' most all de janes fell fer him like a load o' bricks. Believe me, Iron-fisted Harry was some winner. He didn't give a damn fer all de Philadelphia police force. Fightin' and shootin' craps was his middle name. I had a crush on him fer a long time.

Gee! It's tough playin' boy wid a feller you like. Lotsa nights Ironfist an' meself went down ter de sportin' houses, gamblin' joints, gin mills an' other places in de Tenderloin an' then went to his tenement room or me own an' bunked together like a coupla fellers. He'd a been some sore gink if he'd ever known how I was pullin' de wool over his eyes. Poor Ironfist got banged off in de war—went to France. Lotsa me gang went over.

How did I keep de gang wid me?

Say—ask me somethin' hard ter answer.

A gang boss ain't got nothin' ter worry 'bout if he can lick his fellers. I used ter beat up one or two o' me gang every week just ter show 'em who was runnin' their little red wagon. What's more I usta pull all sorts o' tough jobs. Second-story work didn't faze me none. We was always up ter pullin' stunts like dat.

ONCT I was in de prize ring. Needed some jack an' I git's five bucks fer fightin' a Jew feller from Jersey City. Nobody ever got wise ter me. I wears a pair o' trunks an' a top sweater. De ref'ree calls de bout a draw, but he's a liar cause all me bunch says I put it all over de Jew.

'Course I served me time. De cops was after me fer every thing ever happened in de Tenderloin and Chinatown. Sometimes I got pinched—other times I puts it all over de coppers. Here's what happens in a alley one night when a cop chases us fer grabbin' a watch an' some loose chicken feed from a feller.

Me gang scatters de minnit we hears de copper on de run fer us. I beat it like a flash up de alley but I stumbles when I git in a dark place an' de police gink chunks his nightstick fer me bean. I dodges an' grabs de club. When he comes up I socks him. We scuffle 'round fer about three minnits then I gives him de slip and de horse-laf. I had ter hide fer a week ter keep outa trouble cause all de force in de district was after me.

What was de big sensashion in me life as a feller? Oh! dat was de day me last jane hauls me up before Judge Charlie Brown. She tells de judge I gotta marry her right away. Ol' Judge Brown gives me hell fer fair. 'Course I knowed damn well me engaged sweetie was handin' out a bunch o' bunk 'bout me bein' de feller what caused her trouble.

Can you beat dat fer guts? Me jane tells de judge I was de guy. Lemme tell yer something 'bout girls when dey get in a tight jam. Every time de blame's shoved on whatever feller's runnin' 'round wid her regardless. They figger everybody who knows 'em knows de steady feller's chasin' 'round wid 'em an' that folks'll believe he's de one oughta marry her.

When judge tells me I gotta marry her I feels like a fool. Me sweetie had been cheatin' on de sly an' she was gonna make me pay fer it. But, me grandpop was in court an' he spills de beans all over de joint. I sees him ease up ter Judge Brown and whisper something. Judge looks at grandpop like he's a nut. He shakes his head like hell to grandpop. But after a few minnits de court doctor feller is called. He takes me ter de sick room an' hells bells, aint nothin' ter it. Doc gits wise an' pulls me back ter de judge. Say—you coulda knocked Brown down wid a thin newspaper. He wouldn't believe the Doc fer a long time but after while he had ter.

Me sweetie's face went white and green. They had to cart her outa de place. She was in bed for three weeks.

Them was de most thrillin' minnits I ever had cause I didn't know what ter hell to do. I didn't wanta peach on meself—an I knew it was damfoolishness ter think 'bout me marryin' another girl. If it hadn't been fer Grandpop, Gawd A'mighty only knows what woulda happened.

ALL this happened 'bout a year ago. Judge Brown ships me ter Caroliny on probation, or some kinda thing like it. It was de end of "Battlin' Jack McConnell," or "Whistlin' Jack," as de gang all knew me. But nobody much knows anythin 'bout it, so I slips outa Philly like a mouse.

I takes it easy down South fer a year, livin' as a jane. My hair grows out some an' I looks more like a woman than I usta. So I ups and floats into Philly 'bout two months ago. Nobody'd ever know 'bout this business if I hadn't got in a battle two weeks ago wid one of de old gang.

I'm sittin' on top a barrel outside a store when Charley Weaver drifts by an sees me. He crashes me over de back. In a minnit I'm all up an' at him. I fergits me skirts—As one feller put it I fergits I'm a lady fer de time bein'—I waltzes into Weaver and

(*Continued on page* 30)

This unusual feature, secured by one of MIDNIGHT'S staff correspondents, is typical of the manner in which MIDNIGHT gives its readers the romance of the news in colorful form. Few stories that have appeared in the papers recently have been as startling as this girl's experience, which we are sure will interest and amuse you.

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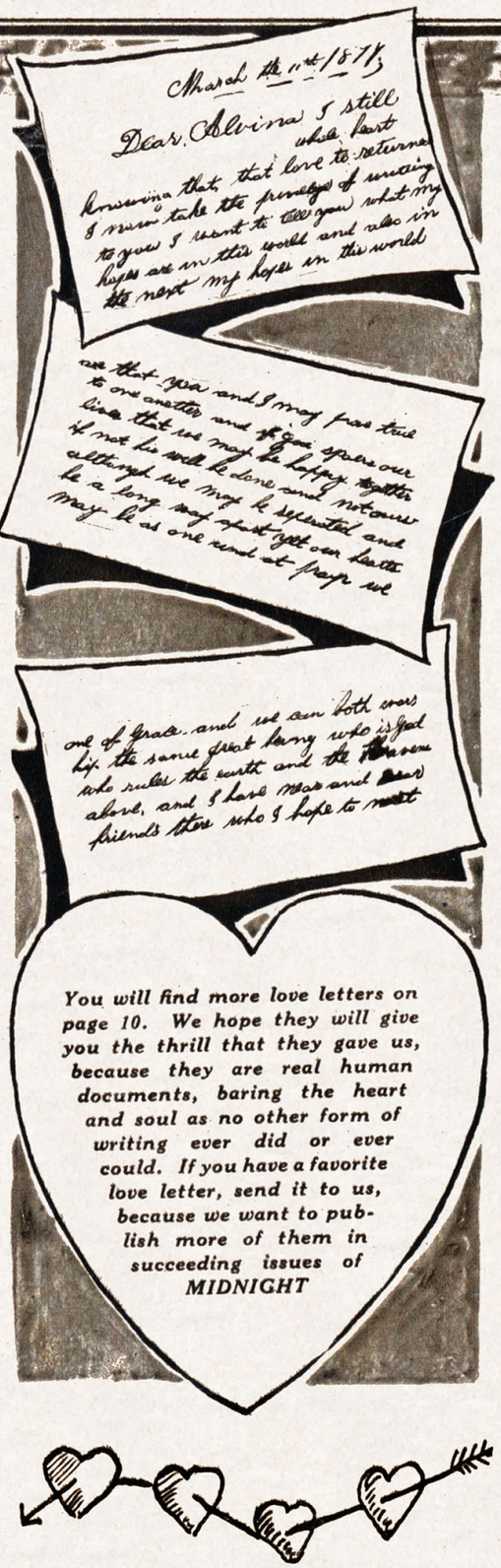
If You must write a love letter

The response to our request for your favorite love letter has been overwhelming. Hundreds of letters have flooded the editor's desk, and they range in style all the way from the austere mid-Victorian to the jazzy love letter style of today. But they are all full of heart interest and you will find here some of those which impressed the editor most.


March the 1st 1871
Dear Alvina I still
Knowing that that love to returned
to you I want to tell you what my
hopes are in this world and also in
the next my hopes in the world
one of grace and we can both meet
by the same great being who is God
who rules the earth and the heaven
above, and I have met dear
friends there who I hope to meet

A STRANGE FEELING IN THE HEART

Dear Heart:

What is this strange feeling in my heart? O, my love, I cannot understand it—you have gone but yesterday, but my heart is longing for your return. Ah, yesterday! In my dreams I live each little moment over, from the moment you said good-bye 'til my last caress brushed your lips. O, sweetheart, I should be patient—I did not know 'til now how I loved you. I look on the old scenes, and the tears spring into my eyes, but I remember your parting words, and try so hard to be patient . . . . Dear one, what is this feeling that keeps pulling at my heart with strange persistency—O, God, the agony of it, when I think that you may never return!

Since you have gone I have felt the uselessness of my old life, and when I think how your love, like the beautiful star that guided the shepherds, helped me over the rocky path, I long, darling, I long, to hold you in my arms again! It is strange—since you have gone, things have seemed so dull. My friends speak to me, and I answer mechanically, but what they have said, or what I have answered, I do not know—all that is in my heart and on my mind is you, you, dearest. To think that you are riding at this moment as I write, on a stuffy train, riding, riding away from me! . . . .

Sweetheart, think of me, as I think of you, always; and as all things must end, our parting will end, 'though God knows it's hard to bear.

And, darling, if anything should happen, I am here always.

Your lover always,

Warren.

AURORA, GODDESS OF THE MORN

Sweetheart:

With an aching heart and trembling fingers I am essaying the impossible; to try to put into words my sorrow at the tidings of your illness. My facile imagination is numb and my glib tongue is stilled, and in my grief I can only realize the futility of a love that cannot ease your sufferings. My life, my happiness, are so entirely independent of my own efforts—I can only hide my head in sorrow at my inability to bear your burdens, to lift the load from your shoulders and place it on my own—inured to pain and callous to hardship. Were I able, Sweetheart, never again would you know pain or feel suffering, but would forever live in your own sweet role as a dispenser of joy and sunshine and laughter along the ways that are too full of sordidness and selfishness. You will not leave us, will you, Dear One?

Could you but know what it has meant to me to have known you, you would be more tolerant in your feelings for my, not wild infatuation, far from it, admiration—reverence—and worship for your many wonderful qualities and sweet adorableness.

I love you. I love you for your grace of heart and strength of mind, for your indomitableness of will that keeps your face ever forward against the almost insurmountable difficulties with which you are confronted. I love you for your beauty. Ah, Thine eyes that have perfected the blue of the violets and Thy cheeks that have broken the hearts of the roses because they may never equal their exquisite color; Thy smile that has brought poignant grief to Aurara, goddess of the Morn; Thy form that will ever be a model to be aimed at, but never attained, by the angels of Heaven and the sirens of the deep; Thy movements that have taught us poor mortals the meaning of the word "Poetry;"—Thy whole being that must cause the gods themselves to stand mute and awed that such perfection could exist: All these, Dear Heart, are ever before me, an Image that grows brighter each day.

Oh, Louise, my Sweetheart, multiplying all of infinity by infinity does not compensate me for one moment's absence from Thee. We pass this way but once, so let us gather what flowers we may by the wayside, and if we can scatter a few rays of sunshine, so much the better. I love your joyousness and light heartedness. I love your ability to gather from each day its bouquets of sweetness. Words are so dull, and you are so precious . . . . I cannot and dare not even undertake to express myself coherently . . . . I love you—that's all I can say; but in my clumsy way I am trying to pray that we may never part again. My Dearest, will you grant me that prayer?

Frank.

FROM AN ABSENT HUSBAND

My Own Darling Little Wife:

Although I have only been gone a few days, it seems an eternity. I would be as one in the dark, were it not for the ever present tender thoughts of you that continually light my way. I shudder to even imagine, my darling, what I would ever do without you. I seem to be separated from my very soul, passing the days only in expectation of the night, when, like Peter Ibbetson, my sweetheart will appear to me in my dreams.

Were I not bound by the consolation that I am away on business for you, dear, I would forego everything and hasten back to the only One, to you who mean so much to me. I know no God, no religion, no Diety except You. I revere and respect you as I love and worship you. I have told you this often and yet it seems I cannot never tell it sufficiently. When so many have suffered and died for a mere God, how can I do or say enough for YOU?

I must stop, for my emotions overwhelm me and I cannot seem to find words to even give you an idea of how much I love you and think of you. For the present, my beautiful Angel, adieu.

Your own devoted

Husband.

SIXTY-ONE YEARS OLD!

August 1, 1861.

Dear One:

If I could but recall the years I've spent with you—what a dream! It is difficult to realize that five years of our youth were spent together—and now—it seems centuries that I have seen you. Six months—like six hundred years! You are sacrificing your love for some reason which I can not fathom. You can not make me believe otherwise. Your attitude on that fatal night that severed us was both too sudden and too determined and yet suffering.

Dearest, I too am suffering. What breach is there to be mended? I can not get you out of my thoughts. It is useless to try to forget. I love you in spite of everything. I will continue to love you until the day that I leave this world forever.

(*Continued on page* 10)

You will find more love letters on page 10. We hope they will give you the thrill that they gave us, because they are real human documents, baring the heart and soul as no other form of writing ever did or ever could. If you have a favorite love letter, send it to us, because we want to publish more of them in succeeding issues of MIDNIGHT

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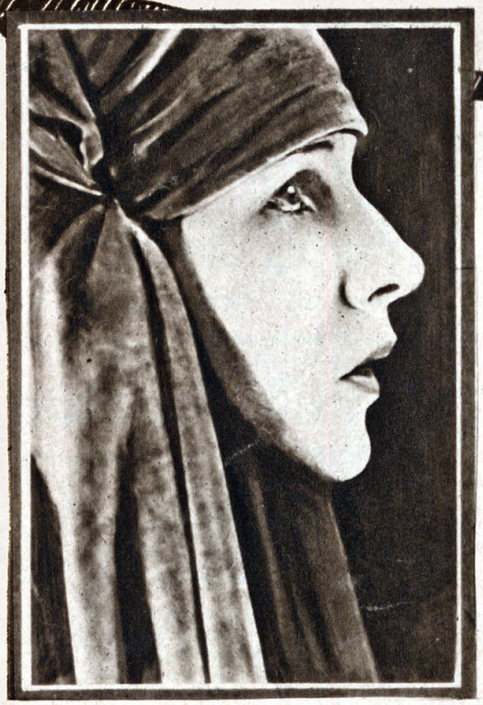
The Amazing Questions Women Ask Me—

by HOPE EDEN

Norman Frescott, Hope Eden's husband, who goes through the audience and assists Miss Eden generally in her work

Where does my husband spend most of his time?

Is My Love Returned?



Hope Eden herself. Miss Eden is probably one of the most skillful mind-readers in the world. Millions of people actually believe that she can read their innermost thoughts.

Is Johnny leading a double life?

AFTER being a mind-reader for five years, I have come to the conclusion that every married woman in America suspects her husband.

During those wonderful five years, in which I have toured the entire United States twice over, I have received literally hundreds of thousands of letters from women who have witnessed my demonstration in the theatre, and want me to answer personal questions through the mail.

I say from women, advisedly. Only once in a month of Sundays does a man take pen in hand to seek enlightenment. From my mail experiences I have come to the belief that women are more curious than men, and infinitely more suspicious.

In the tons of mail with which I am swamped, there is only an occasional letter from a man, and then it is usually the kind of a man who is not very manly, or from raw, inexperienced boys, just awakening to life.

But the women! Their letters are almost entirely about their husbands or their sweethearts. They do not wait until they are married to become suspicious. They are forever nervous that some other woman will steal away their man. It makes me impatient with my own sex. I am a married woman myself. My husband is in the aisles of the theater during our performance, receiving the questions which I answer telepathically from the stage.

I would hate to be suspicious of him. In fact, I believe I am the only married woman in the world who is not suspicious of her husband. And perhaps that is only because I am a mind-reader, and know that he can't put over anything. All women are alike, I suppose, except that mind-readers are few and far between.

Practically every one of the questions which I receive through the mail--and they come in huge batches and bunches every time the postman calls—is from a woman who is worried about some sex question If she is not jealous of her husband, she wants to know how to gain his love, or retain it, or how to rid her body of some blemish which may destroy his love.

I TRY to answer all the letters, though it requires the constant services of two secretaries to keep up with the correspondence. Of course, I have form letters to cover such standard questions as, "Will Sammy's love grow cold?" and "Has Johnny a double life?" and other such foolish inquiries.

Nine cases out of every ten the questions are foolish. If you doubt me, just listen to these, grabbed at random out of to-day's letters:

I am in jail charged with robbery. Will you please tell me if I have to go to prison, and if so, for how long?

I have three individual plans in mind regarding three different youg lady friends and propose to try with each, providing I am unsuccessful with the first, a certain plan. Which one will I succeed with?

Will my husband be promoted in his place of business?

When will I get a position as housekeeper for a widower

Where does my husband spend most of his time?

What can I do to get away from my present difficulties? Can you see any change in store for me or will I always be compelled to live in this place? Please tell me all you can concerning my marriages, present or future ones.

Please tell me what happened to my loss? Where is it? Will I ever recover it?

Who am I going to marry and when? Do you think this light-headed crippled soldier would make me a good husband, could he support me, and would we be happy together. Will I always live in Scranton? Will I always work at cigar-making? Will my mother live long?

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How will our court case now pending, come out?

Will I get my divorce? What is his affinity's name? Will my son get a job soon?

Is my husband faithful to me?

Kindly tell me what my husband has done and is doind with the money he is borrowing?

Is my daughter Genevieve married? Will my daughter Anne hear from an investment she made two years ago?

A short time ago I lost a piece of crochet work which I had spent a good deal of time over and I want to ask you if I shall get it back. Is there any way I can do this?

Is my home going to be pleasant or are we going to disagree and separate? Has he taken up with another woman or is he just weak-minded?

Will I ever hear from my purse?

Do you believe my story is worth typewriting? Will it suit the producer?

Would I be happy if I married my friend in Denver or should I stick to my undertaker and marry him?

Will the dishwasher ever have anything ahead? How soon will I be married? Would I be happy if I married my friend from Denver?

Will I succeed in the career I have taken up? How about the Follies?

Where are my glasses that I lost six months ago?

Please tell me if I am going to get my husband's back pay from the Spanish-American War.

Who stole my bowl of gold fish from the front porch and where do they live?

I am suffering with sweats. What causes these sweats and what can I get to break them up?

We are buying a home on payments and owing to the big reduction in wages we are unable to meet all demands connected with the deal. How shall we come out with it?

My son is intimate with a married woman who is after him and following him night and day, as her husband is working away from home. What will be the result?

I am keeping company with a girl about the same age as I am. I am anxious to know if she loves me and if so will she have better health.

Have been engaged to a young man whom I love dearly, but through a misunderstanding broke up. Will I ever marry him and if so will I be happy?

Is there a cure for the rash on my legs? What shall I do?

When will I see that six-footer from the south?

Will I ever become rich? Am I ever to be the victim of murder or treachery?

Does my wife love me? If not, why not? What is my future? Would you advise me to leave town? Do I love my wife? Would you?

My husband and I often quarrel although I love him dearly. Will we always live together? Are we going to have any children? If so, how soon? When are we going to get out of debt?

Will the photoplay I have just written be rejected?

Which of the men employed at my house took my revolver?

Has my husband been true to me while overseas, and will I take up housekeeping with him when he returns?

Will I marry again? What will be his name?

When and how long will it take my face to clear up? Will I get a position in the Grand Central R. R? Will I be a success in business?

Should I marry again? Will I ever have children?

Is my husband true to me? What is the name of the "other" woman, if there is one?

Where was John last night?

Who is my future husband? Where does he live?

How soon will I be a widow?

Kindly let me know if my husband will sit in the Morris chair or get work.

How can I succeed in my profession?

Will you tell me where the Balance on my books is that I am looking for? It is in the month of September, 1912, either in the Cash posted or in the taking off of the charges or Debits and Credits for the month.

Please tell me if my husband is still living, and if so, where?

What can I do to make my husband love me better? What can I do to get thin? Is it wise for us to move to Springfield, Mass.?

Is L. T. true to me now. Did L. T. have any immoral relations with W. H. as I heard? What is your opinion of this woman? Does she care for me as I care for her?

Does my husband love me? If so, why is he so cruel? Will we ever be divorced? If so, who will get it and on what grounds will it be obtained?

Has my husband always been true to me? If not, will you tell me the name of the other woman? Is there anything I can do to make money so I can have clothes?

Read "A Midnight Seance With Jazzy Spooks" in next week's big Midnight. An astounding revelation!

How did my husband die, and why? His death has always been a mystery. What is my boy's "trouble?" Is there a worth-while matrimonial offer in view for me? Who is he and what is his business? Has a beautiful friendship of some years ago come to an end for good, or will it be revived again some time later? Where should a piece of land in Brooklyn be sold to bring its highest value? A baby necklace with little jewelled clasp is missing for some time. Can you tell me where it is?

Will I ever see Jim Cummings again? If so, when?

Will I ever marry? Will I have any luck in my next job?

Can you tell me the name of the person that my husband spends his affections, time and money on? When is my daughter getting married?

Will my husband divorce me, or will I have to divorce him? Will I get the man who keeps company with me?

Will my daughter return home to me and if so, how long before she will do so? How long will I have to live with my husband?

What is my husband doing, and where does he go? What is the name and address of the people he goes to see? Does he love the girl or does he love me?

Should I go to see my mother at once or wait until spring?

Will I marry this fellow I am keeping company with? Will he ask my people if he can marry me? Is the fellow true to me? Does he love me? Do you think he is a good fellow for me to marry? Will I get a present from him for Easter?

Will I ever find the silk lavender sachet I lost?

Why did Fred Boyd leave my home?

Somebody done me dirty. I would like to find out who the party is and how to find them.

Who will Floss marry and when? What will her top weight be eventually? Who will Bill marry and when? What will become of Ann?

How did I come to get such bad rheumatism? Will I be able to dress myself again?

On June 5, 1919, about 8 A. M., I lost a white poodle, which, no doubt was stolen. Can you give me the least idea as to his whereabouts?

Have I any serious blood trouble; do I inherit any such trouble? Will I succeed in my musical ambitions?

Could you tell me where the body of a little friend of mine who was drowned lies? The river has been dragged several times to no avail.

Where is my girl friend?

Will I succeed in my great undertaking and when? Will I dispose of the one *means* to start that undertaking and when? Can you tell me who is likely to purchase this rare treasure? Will I have to suffer much longer in want, or is help near? Will I ever realize from my two Western interests that are due me?

In the French Embassy is a military prisoner. When and where will the prisoner be tried and what will be the verdict?

What causes me to blush when I am out and anyone I know comes to talk to me?

Can you tell me where Peter is?

What was my husband trying to tell me just before he died? Who stole his umbrella and where is it?

Is my brother really hypnotized as he thinks he is? He has just gone to Hot Springs for a rest. I have not heard from him. Has anything happened to him? Will he be benefited by the treatment there?

Will I marry Bill? When? What will he give me for a Christmas present? After marriage will I be happy? Will I ever be wealthy?

BUT every now and then I get a very serious letter, and then I do my level best to help. One of the most extraordinary communications I ever received was from a woman who had been separated from her lover by parents who had opposed the match. Oddly, indeed, but nevertheless truly, a letter from that girl's sweetheart asking me to help him find her came in the mail a day or so later. One of my secretaries discovered it, and we were able to baffle those cruel and unthinking parents and bring those yearning hearts together. They think I am the greatest mind-reader in the world, and I suppose they, at least, have good cause to think so.

Such letters are few and far between, but because they do come in, every once in a while, we scan every letter thoroughly. When there is a chance to help, I want to be able to do so.

My husband says that is due to my weakness for romance. That is true. I am incurably romantic. That is why I am a mind-reader—I sympathize even with the most sordid love stories which are brought to me. And some of them are sordid—and yet running through them all I find one golden thread of pure affection which redeems and makes as beautiful the affairs of Judy O'Grady, just as surely as those of colonel's lady.

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the three most influential men in New York · they don't exist!

By P. L. A.

IN order to get a drink in New York City you should know either Joe Mulligan, Ham Struthers, or Senator Walkley. These are fictitious names, but they will serve. If you know these three men you will have no more trouble getting a drink than you would have buying a railroad ticket for Peekskill, and both will cost about the same.

Mulligan is the name you use over on Second Avenue around Thirty-third Street.

You walk up to Mike, the fat bartender and you say, "Rye!" just like that.

Mike continues work on the glass he is polishing with a soiled bar-rag.

"Sarsparilla, ginger ale, cream soda—all soft drinks," he chants, and then he loses interest in you.

"Don't you sell liquor here?" you ask in an injured tone of voice.

"Nothin' doin' young fellah," Mike replies in a tone that would do credit to a bored debutante.

It is then that you mention Joe Mulligan. You well know that Joe's name may prove ineffective, but you take a chance on it anyway, like a magazine subscription canvasser putting one foot in a Harlem housewife's half-opened door.

"Do you know Joe Mulligan?" you ask confidently, placing a foot on the bar rail.

Mike stops polishing the glass. His face assumes a thoughtful expression. He looks you over carefully.

"Is he workin' fer the gas company?" Mike asks.

"Yes," you reply.

"What'll you have?" Mike inquires and the glass polishing is over for the time being at least.

Now you don't know such a person as Joe Mulligan; Mike isn't sure of him either. But he does know a lot of Toms and Joes and Jerrys who come in the saloon regularly and Mulligan sounds like a good, plausible Second Avenue name, so Mike takes a chance on you. You drink. You pay sixty cents. You depart. Joe's name has turned the trick. That's the way the thing *is done* on Second Avenue.

On one of the side streets just off Broadway there are a number of ultra smart restaurants. There is no bar; no Mike; no sawdust on the floor. You are on the west side and it is in New York, and as Kipling nearly said, "Eastside is Eastside and Westside is Westside and never the twain shall meet." Consequently the suave proprietor or the head waiter has never met Joe Mulligan except at such times as Joe may have come incognito through the back entrance to read the gas-meter in the kitchen. There is no doubt Joe has more than once snatched a little slug in company with the genial chef—but Joe's name at the front door means nothing whatever.

You seat yourself, order a meal and then, as the sad-eyed waiter is about to depart, you say in a low well-modulated voice, "How about a little drink?"

The waiter is insulted. You have suggested his participation in a crime against the commonwealth.

"We do not sell anything to drink here," he says surlily and moves off.

Now you play your trump card.

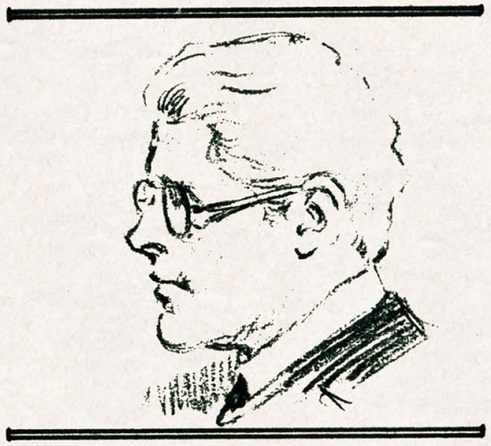
You call him back and you whisper, "Do you know Ham Struthers?"

"Is he connected with the Excelsior Pulp and Cactus Company?" the waiter asks.

"Yes," you reply. "He is one of my best friends. We went to school together.

"Have you a card with you?" the waiter inquires.

Joe Mulligan, whose name on Third Avenue is as good as gold



Here we have Ham Struthers, who sells dry goods by day and buys wet goods by night

The Senator is a staid, dignified individual, but there are other things he can help you get besides state appropriations for the home town.

You produce your card. The waiter takes a pair of eye-glasses from his vest pocket, he adjusts them, he walks to the window to get a better light on your situation, and he returns.

"What will you have?" he asks. The ice is broken. Ham Struthers has performed a function. You see the waiter thinks he knows Ham just as Mike thought he knew Joe. And you look like an all-right guy, so the waiter takes a chance. You drink. You pay one dollar plus a quarter tip and you depart. That's the way it's done in the roaring forties.

AFTER the play you repair to one of the famous cabarets. You are in fulll dress; you have a lady by your side. The head waiter greets you effusively. He introduces you to an ordinary waiter. You seat yourself at a table at the edge of the dance floor. You languidly accept the "Carte du Jour" handed you by a bus boy. Others are bringing water, napkins, table-ware and bread. The sad-faced, expectant waiter hovers over you. The orchestra bursts into jazz. A wild young salesman from Syracuse is hammering on his table with a little wooden mallet provided by the management. Couples everywhere rise from their tables and move toward the dance floor.

"Two Scotch high-balls with a pint of white rock on the side," you say with an air of authority.

The waiter moves away.

Three minutes elapse.

The head waiter, followed by the waiter appears. He bends over you, rubs his palms together and says pleasantly enough, "Very sorry, sir, but we do not provide our guests with intoxicating liquors. May I suggest a pineapple cup—not against the law, sir, and very pleasant."

You do not want a pineapple cup. You say so. Then you say, "I presume you know Senator Walkley."

The headwaiter would not, for a moment, let the presumption pass.

"Oh, indeed, well sir," he replies.

"I am his friend," you say proudly. "He asked me to come here, mention his name to you and that you would take care of me. Of course——," your voice trails off.

"My apology, sir," the head waiter murmurs. "Bring Mr.— Mr.—."

"Walters," you say curtly.

"Yes, sir. Mr. Walters. Bring Mr. Walters what he wishes."

The waiter takes your order.

Senator Walkley, though he possesses no corporeal body, yet has demonstrated that he has a soul which goes marching on. The pronunciation of his name on Second Avenue would be met with disdain; on one of the side-streets it would be met with incredulity. But at the Broadway cabaret, couvert charge two dollars, he commands respect. That there is no Senator Walkley makes not the slightest difference in the world. You have your drinks. You pay six dollars and a half. It costs money to move in the best society.

IF you are known, or if you seem to be known, there is scarcely any place in New York where you can't get a drink. As a man-about-town said recently, the only place he knows of where you can't get a drink is at the Harriman National Bank. That jest shows up the wide-spread non-enforcement of law that makes New York one of the wettest spots in Volsteadland.

There are other ways to get a drink, to be sure. But knowing Joe, Ham or the Senator certainly helps.

Some of our diligent government sleuths ought to get acquainted with those three gentlemen.

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When Love Guides the Pen—Continued from page 6

You too are suffering. Why must we wreck our lives? I feel that you will be waiting for me as I shall be waiting for you, but, for God's sake, for your own happiness and mine, I pray, I hope, that, that mysterious something doesn't keep us waiting until eternity.

I will sacrifice everything. I will go through the mire for you. What is it that stills your tongue, although your heart cries out even as mine?

I need you dearest. Just an encouraging word will charge once more my poor dejected spirit with the vitality, the ambitions and aspirations that have seeped out of me. I can think of nothing, but you.

I know the misery of this letter to you and I will not write again unless you desire it—for the agony is too intense for a bleeding heart to endure.

P. M.

MUTED MUSIC

Dear Girl-Of-My-Heart:

The very mandolins, playing their muted music in the stringed orchestra hidden behind the palms, seemed strumming a mystic melody of Love on my heartstrings, after you left the ball-room last night, refusing to let me accompany you, all because of a foolish misunderstanding that could have been avoided, if only I had done my part.

When I told you of my love for you, while we were sitting out a dance behind some sheltering palms, you asked me if I had ever loved another woman. When I told you that I must confess that I *had* loved before, your bowed head and crimson cheeks warned me that I had hurt you. I realized that I should tell you all, but in a spirit of teasing I let you draw your own conclusions. Girl, dear, let me explain, now, about that first sweetheart . . . . for even now I dream of her kisses on my brow, and hear her soft whisperings of undying devotion. I think of our wonderful nights together, when I used to promise I'd never leave her. But she left me, because she was called away . . . . She was my darling Angel Mother.

Now, do you understand, dear? And do you forgive me? If she could but see the lovely girl I have chosen to fill the vacant niche in my heart, she would love you, too, and she would take you to her heart just as I long to do.

I will not rest until your dear lips tell me that all is forgiven, and that you love me as you are loved by

Your Own Teddy.

FOUND ON THE BODY OF AN UNIDENTIFIED SUICIDE

Dearest Lover in the World:

Your wonderful little message was here this morning when I arrived, and it made me so wild that I can hardly wait to do all the wonderful things I want to, and you want me to. Sweetheart, if I could see you now, I think you would never forget your girl. I want to feel you close, Baby; I want to kiss you and love you. I want to—O, I want everything in life dear! I want to be yours—all yours—I am wild my darling to have you in my arms, pressed close to my heart.

Baby, forgive me for being so wild, but I must tell it to you. The flood gates of my heart are open and the torrent of love is rushing through. You won't need to say a word dear. I'll just say "Lead me—I'll follow."

Ah, Sugar Boy, you are going to suffer—but God, how sweet it will be. I will kiss you and love you until you are completely exhausted. You say you think I am wonderful; I'll show you, Baby Sweet, how wonderful I can be. You have set my soul aflame, and I am counting the moments until you quench the flames with your own love. I want to drink at the fountain of love dear. I want to feel you all over. I want to have you. I want a mate dear. Springtime is in my heart, and I am calling to you.

Do you hear me, dear?

Maybe I am wild, but forgive me darling. I want life and love and I want it from you. Don't call me, but the first opportunity, Lover, I'll call you. Then—Heaven help us. I love you, Baby.

All my love and kisses, dear,

Your own

Does all the world love a lover? Well—sometimes the girl's father isn't crazy about him!

A DREAM OF HAPPINESS

To My Dream Girl:

You came to me again, dear, last night in my dreams and for a few blissful moments I was happy once again. I forgot you had told me good-bye—forgotten was all the heart-rending silence since the time when we parted. You rested your head upon my shoulder, looked up into my eyes and tenderly kissed away the sorrow and cares of the day. You told me again that you loved only me—and then like a vision you faded away and left me with nothing but a memory and I woke to this old world of reality and sham to find my momentary happiness was only a dream. But oh, little girl, such a memory! I shall always treasure it and even though I may never see you again I shall feel that I have been repaid somewhat for my loss just by the memory of your sad sweet smile and your farewell caress, like an Angel's token, and the memory of you and the lov that once was mine shall lead me onward, upward—to an unseen goal. Yes, I dream of you my Angel friend—I worship at your shrine if not at that of the Orthodox—I hold you tightly, irresistably in my arms and tenderly caress you to a careless sleep. Is it farewell?

Always love, even unto death,

Jack.

THE GIRL HE LEFT BEHIND

Wolfville, N. S., July 20, 1920.

My Dearest:

Your dear sweet letter received today and oh! but it brought joy to my heart. I have been longing for some word from you and now my wish has become realization and I am supremely happy.

Will I always love you? Shall the change in your appearance; wrought by the passing years make any difference? Certainly I shall always love you, and although you may have changed in appearance I know that your heart and soul are still the same; pure and loving; and after all it is the heart and soul that really make for true happiness, and real love extends far beyond outward appearance. I do not love you because of your outward beauty, but because God gave me a glimpse below the surface and I saw the golden heart, the clean pure soul. I long for you dearie, long with all the longing of my loving heart. I want you, won't you come back to your old love?

Please answer soon and say you will leave at once for home and back to your little sweetheart who loves you so sincerely.

Good-night sweetheart and God bless you.

Yours lovingly,

L.

SPURRED TO HIGHER ENDEAVORS

Most Wonderful Girl:

Bless your great big luscious heart and the infinite goodness of your soul. Your letter made me tremendously happy. It was of the sweetest nectar.

In this sleepy old town so far away from my beloved, life would be indeed a bore and insufferable were it not for the delicious communion of our letters. And my dreams! Oh, yes, I am the same old incorrigible dreamer. Last night as I lay on my solitary cot I was transported to a world of exquisite fancy. Visions and images of the most touching beauty unfolded themselves to me, your figure being ever predominant. We were together under a fragrant arch of sweet-scented flowers. It seemed an enchanting reality as your heart beat against mine. Your eyes were closed, but I could discern a solicitous tenderness behind the transparent lids. The night was quite cool, but your lips resting on mine sent a wave of thrilling magnetism coursing through my veins and intoxicated me with an exhilarating warmth. Up, up soared my soul to a grandeur high above all earthiness. God! how real it was. The awakening seemed a hallucination and the dream a reality.

Mary darling, this dream is but one of a hundred screened on the background of my brain. They sustain me in the struggle with that which I must accomplish ere I return and claim you. I count every step won not as an achievement in itself so much as a vindication of your tender trust in me.

Dearest girl you are so good. So gentle. So sweet. These wonderful attributes exert a powerful effect over me. I also become good, and gentle, and soft. Always I am spurred on to higher endeavors. If ambition lags for a moment I think of you and my spirit is charged with the fire of a thousand passions.

Keep up your good cheer, dear, for soon I shall be with you and make you mine. To that end I am slaying the demon work with mighty assaults, the quicker to bring the happy day around. Au revoir for a day little angel. God keep you.

Your devoted Michel.

DREAM CHILDREN

Sweetheart:

This morning, I was awakened by a cardinal singing. I peeped out of the frosted window, and there he was—top-knot and all—swinging on a slender twig and pouring out his heart to Lady Cardinal, who demurely regarded him. His song, filled with the pure love of living, of loving and in being loved, found a quick response in me, for the very thought of you and our love causes a happiness which cannot be told in words.

The day has passed all to quickly and was full to the brim, as it, of course, would be for any girl who has only seven days left in which to claim her own name.

Evening came, and as the twilight deepened, I curled up in the big chair—our chair—before the glowing embers. I wanted no other light, for it is thus that I like to dream over this wonderful love which has come to me.

How often have we sat in this old chair's huge embrace and with your arms about me have told of our inmost secrets, ambitions, ideals and desires! The twilight talks have meant much to me and you have been a magical sweetheart, changing life into something very sweet.

To me you are the One Man, for I am a one-man woman. You with your strength of mind, character and body, yet gentle and considerate; you with your keen humor and appreciation of the great-out-of-doors, yet with your love of truth and your chosen work. Truly am I blessed, and our partnership cannot fail.

Marriage to me is sacred. I think of it happily yet seriously. It is for life until death, and then—who knows?

I shut my eyes and, in fancy, I see wee faces—our dream-children—and my dream is complete.

The hour grows late, and until you come, just love me, for I love and desire you above all else.

And now, Beloved, good-night.

H. M. K.

Sold to the Devil

A new mystery serial by John R. Coryell begins in next week's

MIDNIGHT

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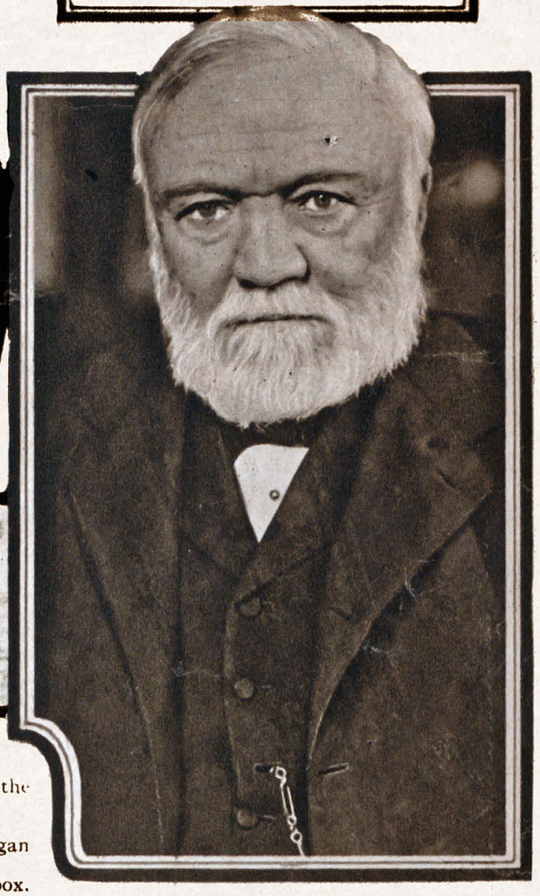
How Andrew Carnegie Saved Me from a Thrashing

Being the fifth of a series of stories that never saw print before

By a Cub Reporter



"GOOD-BYE, young man and God bless you. I hope you will make a brilliant success in your career."

Andrew Carnegie said that to me one golden autumn afternoon just after he had saved me from being kicked down a long flight of stairs and had told me some intimate personal details about the private physical condition of Mrs. Carnegie.

This little adventure in which the great steel master projected himself so opportunely and so unexpectedly is one of my most amusing memories.

It happened at the opening session of an international congress of statesmen and publicists from all over the world. They had gathered to devise ways and means to perpetuate peace forever on the globe—and the meeting was held just a year before the European war began. On the platform were former presidents of the United States, diplomats of high and low degree and men of distinction in every calling. The principal speaker of the afternoon was to be Andrew Carnegie.

Being only a cub reporter, I was given the most insignificant detail of the assignment. It was my duty to go through the private boxes in the auditorium and secure the names of the people gathered there. I went from box to box with pad and pencil in hand and took down the names.

As I was nearing the end of the half moon of boxes Andrew Carnegie was introduced and a great gust of hand-clapping swept through the house. I paused to listen to his dignified utterance for a moment, then reluctantly returned to my task only to discover that I was at the curtained entrance to the Carnegie box and that this was the Carnegie party. Name after name was given me until finally I had them all, but that of Mrs. Carnegie was not among the names I had jotted down.

I bent down and whispered to one of the young men in the party:

"Where is Mrs. Carnegie?"

"Why, she was just taken ill," he told me. "She had a hemorrhage and then fainted and she——"

"Hush! Don't tell that reporter that!" said a commanding-looking woman sitting beside my informant, a lady who conducted herself as if she were his wife and was accustomed to giving him orders.

I turned my attention immediately from the husband to the wife.

"Does Mr. Carnegie know that?" I asked.

"No, we could not reach him before he began making his speech," she replied.

"Thank you," I said and backed out of the box.

I was thrilled at the story upon which I had stumbled. Andrew Carnegie, one of the most famous men in the world making a speech before an audience that numbered many thousands, and not knowing that his wife might be at death's door in the same building. I was only a cub reporter, but I knew that was a story.

WITHOUT bothering to get any more names, I rushed to the back of the house and crossed the lobby to the women's retiring room where I was sure they had carried Mrs. Carnegie. This assumption was confirmed when I saw a physician hurrying through the door which closed behind him. I was about to follow him when a huge form interfered and a heavy hand was clamped on my shoulder.

"Where are you going?" said a harsh and rasping voice.

I looked up and found myself halted by no less a dignitary than the President of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association. This gentleman had a reputation all his own. He had made a great deal of money and took his position in life very seriously. As a member of the Local Committee in charge of the peace meeting, he had had a great deal to say in the newspapers. He was almost seven feet tall and broad in proportion, with a very loud voice, and wanted to be considered a masterful personality. He looked down at me belligerently.

"I am a reporter," I said, "and I want to find out about Mrs. Carnegie's illness."

"You just run on and sell your papers," he said, contemptuously. "There's not going to be anything in the papers about that. Now beat it.!"

I jerked myself free from his grasp on my shoulder and told him I was going to stay right where I was. At this his face crimsoned with anger.

"I told you to get out of here," he said, "and you want to get out of here quick! I'm going to protect Mrs. Carnegie from just such people as you. Now, go on!"

"I'm going to stay right here!" I retorted.

My refusal to obey his orders was such an insult to his pride that he fairly trembled with anger.

"If you don't get down those stairs this minute, I'm going to have you fired!" he said.

"And if I don't stay here and get this story I'll be fired anyhow," I replied.

Without another word he grabbed me by the collar and with one hand against my back rushed me across the lobby and was about, I believe, to throw me bodily down the marble staircase. I kicked his shins, but that was the best I could do. Just at the merriest part of the scuffle, there came an intrusion.

A DIMINUTIVE old gentleman with a neat white beard, and clutching a silk hat in one hand, rushed up to us and put his hand on my assailant's arm. The struggle ended instantly. The newcomer was Andrew Carnegie.

"What's this? What's this, Mr. ——?" he demanded.

"This reporter is trying to get something about Mrs. Carnegie's illness and I'm throwing him down the stairs," replied the President of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association with a smile that plainly sought approval.

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed Andrew Carnegie. "Let me talk to the young man."

A little flushed and shaken, I came nearer to Mr. Carnegie. He smiled at me in the most friendly fashion in the world.

"Young man," he said, "if you don't object to waiting here just a moment until I go in and see Mrs. Carnegie, I will be glad to come out and give you the whole story."

"I shall be very glad to wait," I assured him. "You are very kind."

"Not kind," he replied, "only sensible."

Without glancing at the President of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association, he scurried through the door and disappeared. When the

(*Continued on page* 29)

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My Greatest Midnight Thrill!

These thrills are entered in the great MIDNIGHT Thrill Contest for $500.00 in prizes. See page 2 this issue

A MESSENGER IN THE NIGHT

I RETURNED home from the World War, married the girl of my dreams and settled down. We had a pretty little home out in the country, a dear little girl of four and "Kim," a German police dog that I brought back with me.

One evening I attended a dance of the alumni of a school I formerly attended. I danced with a beautiful young auburn haired girl. That one innocent dance led to this story.

She resided at a fashionable apartment house in the city. Consequently we lunched together quite often.

I soon lost interest in my home, wife, child and dog. I frequently stayed in the city over night on—business. One night at Midnight—I was at the apartment of my auburn haired friend—there was a scratching on the door. Upon opening the door "Kim" grabbed me by the coat.

Without saying a word or stopping to get my cap, I followed "Kim" out into the night.

We ran the two miles to my country home. When I arrived the house was in flames. I unlocked the door and was met by a volume of flames. I fought my way up the stairs to my child's room.

Overcome by smoke I fell helpless. "Kim" dragged me out upon the lawn. Then he rushed into the house. I never saw him again. The house burned to the ground. My wife and child had gone to a better world.

"Kim" was always kept outside. Had "Kim" been in the house he would have awakened my wife and child. The doors were always kept locked at night. After trying to get in he came for me. But it was too late.

Dear old "Kim," he is happy now up in the dog's heaven. He did his work well.

"God's will be done." I have paid the price for my folly.

Alone, I wander through this earth and will wander on and on until the day shall come when, after the punishment for my folly, I shall be with my loved ones in the great beyond.

H. D. H.

WHAT IS IT?

MIDNIGHT! And the bells tolling above me so dolefully gave me a vague, shadowy fear. I crept along the side of the church. A dark figure will-o-the-wisped its way through the churchyard. I trembled. Cold steel on the back of my neck! The barrel of the revolver moved a trifle—a more firm grasp, the better to pull the trigger. My scalp prickled.

A scuffle. Now a sack over my head instead of that barrel at my neck. My hands tied behind me—my ankles roped together.

"Damn fool"—a thick mutter—"Take him down to the river where we can dump the body!"

Upward and downward jolts as we passed the curbing—one block, two, three. A pier—muffled footsteps on wood—lapping water about the piles.

"Knife him. You're a hell of a guy for this business."

I jerked aside and fell into the water below. It lapped around me. Soon I would join those numberless other river bodies. I shuddered.

My breath came in quick gasps through the sack. My neck was breaking from the strain of keeping it above water. Something slimy slipped over my hands. A log scraped my shoulder—I could not grasp it. I choked inside the sack—water went down my throat—I choked more.

A voice—the sack was taken from my head. Then blackness.

Marc H. Fox.

OVER THE MADHOUSE WALL

IT was a bleak, foggy night in late November. I had just left my fiancee and the touch of her sweet lips to mine still lingered, so that I was oblivious to the chilling dampness of the fog, and the fact that just before me loomed the dismal walls which surrounded the Henshaw Private Insane Hospital.

The chiming of the clock in the Cathedral tower roused me from my reverie. Midnight!

I stopped to touch a match to my cigar. Hardly had I tossed away the match than there came the thud of a falling body close behind me. I turned. To my horror, I perceived a man scrambling to his feet. The truth flashed upon me! A maniac! He must have vaulted the wall, thus escaping from the institution!

My feet seemed glued to the pavement. He rushed towards me brandishing a revolver. "Make a move to betray my escape and you're a dead man," he muttered hoarsely, "You damned spy!"

He pressed the weapon to my side, and commanded that I take him to a place of safety for the night. Helpless, I was forced to humor him. Through the thick fog I escorted him to my bachelor apartment.

As I switched on the lights in my living-room, I viewed for the first time his face, and noticed his garb. A cry of astonishment escaped me, for my supposed lunatic was none other than a *guard* of the Institution, and a well-known friend of mine!

I called his name. As if in a daze, he rubbed his eyes, his jaw hung loosely, and he uttered a low moan. I could see that he was in a state of semi-coma.

It seemed that constant association with the insane patients, and the fear that some night one of them might escape, had preyed on his mind in such a fashion as to form a self-hypnosis. Continual brooding on his part had, he concluded, after I had gone into details about the condition in which he had accosted me, mentally unbalanced him, for the time being. He had become, as it were, the very lunatic he had pictured so often as escaping.

I heard recently that owing to the shattered condition of his nervous system, he had resigned his position as night guard at the Institution.

Myron Eddy.

AFTER TWENTY YEARS!

MY bachelor's residence was a suite at the Ritz. My life was one of constant excitement—the sort of excitement one can derive from the cafes and theatres. I was vainly endeavoring to erase Anna's white, despairing face from my consciousness. Never can I undo the irreparable wrong I did her. I could not marry her, because in marrying before thirty I would have forfeited my uncle's legacy.

So I possessed her through a false marriage—a year later I fled the city. I could not forget her words when she said, *"I will find you, John Armstrong, and you shall pay!"*

That was twenty years ago, and I had not heard from her until that memorable night one month ago today.

I entered my suite on the stroke of twelve. Then my blood froze in my veins! Lying directly across my threshold was the purple, bloated corpse of a drowned woman!!! Her face grinned hideously—her hand held a note encased in a waterproof purse. It read—my God, how can I describe the utter terror with which I read!—

I have found you, John Armstrong, you shall pay.
Anna.

This loathesome thing Anna? My whole being recoiled—a feeling of nausea overcame me—there was a roaring in my ears—everything went black, and when I came to my senses I was in this hospital—paralyzed for the rest of my life. Anna has made me pay, all right. She came to see me the other day. The real Anna. The body she had obtained from the Morgue. She stood in that door over there and looked at this frozen body of mine and laughed and laughed and laughed.

C. E. M. W.

THE THRILL I WILL NEVER FORGET

AT the time this story took place I had not seen my mother for several years, although I have always written her and received a letter from her each week.

I was with my husband in the Northern part of Canada where his love of adventure had put him "in bad." I did not approve of many things he did, but I loved him dearly and left no stone unturned to help him when he was in trouble.

This night I was determined to secure some papers that contained damaging evidence against him. These papers were in a room across the hall from mine. The occupant of this room went to work at eleven o'clock at night.

I waited until nearly twelve o'clock. Then I got up, dressed in the dark, got my skeleton key; it was just midnight when I turned to leave my room.

I didn't move another step. *The form of my mother stood against the door.* Not a ghostly form but just as I saw her last. Dressed in a little white house dress and cap. She had a letter in her hand and she was shaking her head "No."

I was frightened out of my senses. My first thought was that my mother was dead. That form remained until I got back to bed, then she came and sat on the edge of my bed—I could feel her weight against me—I reached for her but she was gone.

I learned the next morning that this man did not go to work that night but was in his room when my mother's form barred my door.

My mother was not dead. Two thousand miles separated us, but her spirit was with me on that night and kept me from making a bad mistake.

That is a thrill I can never forget.

E. May Graves.

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The Girl Who Paid $15,000 for Me!

A Midnight Thriller by T. Howard Kelly and P. L. Atkinson

THREE minutes passed. The girl had not shown any hopeful signs of rousing herself from the fainting spell which followed her rescue. Jack continued chafing her wrists. His eyes traveled over her polished boots and her fashionable linen riding habit.

The girl's beauty was unusual. It was the wholesome brunette beauty one associates with the ideal American feminine type who mixes society and sports. Yet there was a subtle quality of foreign tracery in her face at once elusive and intriguing. Undoubtedly she was an aristocrat, and wealthy. Such were the conclusions hurriedly reached as he propped her head against his knees and chafed her slender wrists in an effort to bring back consciousness.

"Gad! I wish she'd come around," he mused half aloud.

As if in answer to his expressed wish the girl slowly opened her eyes. Then half veiling them with their long luxuriant lashes, she stared at Jack vaguely. Her breast heaved several times as her breath returned.

Sensing the fact that she was vainly trying to puzzle out the situation, Traven enlightened her.

"Your horse ran away with you. I stopped him—then you fainted. Better lie still a moment until you get your breath."

"Shingles ran away with me?" Her voice was low and vibrant. Guiltily aware that the necessity for holding her wrist was past, he released it quickly. Simultaneously the girl sat up straight as if she too had recalled the conventions.

"How did you ever stop Shingles?" she asked.

"I don't know just how I stopped Shingles. I guess he got tired dragging my weight——" answered Jack.

"Well, anyhow I'm mighty much obliged," she said, giving him her hand. He held it for a moment and looked into eyes which reminded him of something Spanish, or perhaps it was Egyptian. He was not sure.

"I'm mighty glad I could be of a little service," he replied simply, letting go of her hand reluctantly.

A strange silence came upon the two. All the while it lasted Jack Traven was thinking he had better make a break for the office. But he couldn't make up his mind to terminate the experience so abruptly.

Suddenly the girl who had been in deep thought turned to Traven:

"Can you spare a few more moments?" she questioned.

Thoughts of the office quickly vanished in the mind of Jack.

"Certainly," he shot back.

"I am looking for a man with heaps of nerve," she began as the dark depths of her eyes became very serious. Her beauty, growing more mysterious with each passing moment seemed exotic rather than native, "You've got nerve, I know. You look like a man to take a chance. Would you, for money, for me?"

"Yes," was his unhesitating reply as something about the girl swayed his fancy.

"Then—May I ask you some very, very personal questions?"

"Shoot," he answered.

"Have you ever killed a man?"

This question shocked him out of breath for a moment. The girl toyed nervously with a blade of grass as she waited for his reply.

"Why yes—I—I—have killed about twenty in all," he admitted.

"Where—when—and how?" she persisted.

"Three years ago in France with a machine gun and a rifle."

"You fought in the war, you mean?"

"That's it," answered Jack nodding his head to emphasize his words.

"Then you have nerve enough to kill a man if necessary? Don't answer this unless you are positive of yourself."

JACK TRAVEN felt hot and cold needles tingle up and down his back. What under the sun was this girl up to? Who was she, and why should she want to know if he would kill a man? Had some man wronged her? Was she figuring on hiring him to kill somebody?

"Are you married?" her voice seemed steady enough.

"No," was his laconic reply.

"Would you risk your life for the chance of earning fifteen thousand dollars?"

"You bet I would," interrupted Jack Traven.

"If I told you there was something very great at stake, and asked you to do something very dangerous, would you trust me?"

"I mean exactly all of that," he answered.

"You are taking a big chance—you may not be using your best judgment and common sense, you know," she was saying.

"It won't be the first time," he smiled. "Won't you tell me what's on your mind now?"

"First of all, do you own a pistol?"

"I'm sorry—I sold my automatic five days ago."

"That really doesn't matter. I have several of my own. I will bring you three to choose from."

"Am I to know anything more about this business?" Traven's curiosity was getting the better of him.

"I will tell you all I can when I give you the pistol."

"When will that be?" cut in the boy.

"It must be tonight. I am going to a dance at the Plaza. I will break away for a half hour. Do you know the part near the Fifth Avenue entrance at 59th."

"Fairly well," said the boy.

"Off the wide pavement there is a rustic path leading to the big lake. Meet me on that path at midnight. But, if I do not show up at once wait at least an hour for me. Will you be there?" she asked, her mysterious eyes searching his own.

"Count on me," he answered fascinated by the lights in her eyes and the rise and fall of her young breast as excitement transmitted itself from her voice to her body.

"Even tonight I cannot tell you very much—just the bare first plan is all. I can only ask you to trust me."

"I will be there anyhow," asserted Traven rising

Try This On Your Nerves!

"Suddenly a wide flash of yellow light revealed a man standing about fifteen feet away holding a levelled pistol. The flash lasted only a second. Traven barely had time to do more than get a fleeting glimpse of the man with the revolver. Somewhat blinded by the momentary glare, he shut his eyes and fired point blank at the man.

"There was a tinkling crash of splintered glass. But no human cry came to tell him he had hit his mark. Crouching in the doorway he pulled the trigger of his automatic again. The hammer clicked metallicly, but there was no sharp crack of exploded powder. The gun had missed fire!"

That is the big situation in this story!

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to follow the girl's example. She was holding out her hand again. For the first time he realized that a brilliant platinum and diamond ring encircled her engagement finger. Jack hated to think she was engaged. It rather took some of the glamor out of the thing to know the girl was already the property of another man. But he had promised himself, and even if she were engaged, wealthy and all of that, wasn't there always a fighting chance? For a Traven of Kentucky there was no such word as "quit."

"We must not be seen leaving here together. I am too well known. Here come some riders now. Good-bye," her voice floated to him like sweet music—"Tonight on the path at midnight, and thank you again——"

"Right-o-" replied Jack as her warm smile intoxicated him. He turned and walked rapidly away from her, his mind a confusion of thoughts and his heart in an uproar.

"Gad! What a wonderful girl," he kept saying over and over again. "But what the deuce is she up to?"

IT was ten minutes to twelve. Jack Traven waited on the shadowed path of rendezvous, impatient again to see the fascinating and mysterious girl of his early morning adventure. A fever of excitement and curiosity worked fire-like through his veins.

A streak of common sense in his nature insisted that he was a mighty credulous sort of fool to pin his faith to a strange woman because she was exceedingly beautiful and attractive. However, strong confidence in his powers of observation told him she would turn out all right.

While he stood looking up at the star-powdered sky and the myriad lights of the great wakeful city there was a sound of light footfalls on the path. They quickened as they drew nearer. Certain it was the girl, Jack advanced to meet the comer. Three long steps brought him to the bend in the leafy pathway. A girl was coming towards him. But she was short and there was nothing about her carriage or her figure to suggest the superior, graceful girl of the riding trail. Disappointed, he turned on his heel and walked a few paces back to his original stand. The approaching footsteps became swifter. The oncoming girl broke into a little run.

"Senor—senor," she gasped in a low, rich Latin voice as she came abreast of him, panting and obviously very excited. He was about to ask her what was wrong when she impulsively took hold his hands as if to prevent him from escape. Dumbfounded he made no effort to break her hold.

"Oh, senor—gracias a Dios—I am here—and my terrible sister she is not first—My sister, she hurt you, senor!"

"You have made a mistake," interrupted Traven, "I do not know your sister——"

At these words the girl's hands dropped by her side. She stepped back a few paces as if to beg his pardon. Traven felt he was facing a girl of the servant class.

"But, senor—please—did you not come tonight to meet a very beautiful girl—a very rich looking girl—who look like a lady in her white clothes for the horseback——"

Jack's interest accelerated as the girl's broken English came to his ears with a new meaning.

"Go on—what about that girl?" he cried.

"That is my sister—my beautiful, dangerous sister—already Senor, many men, many fine young men like you get in trouble—she is danger, Senor—Dios mio——" she shuddered. "Keep away."

"You say she is dangerous,—how—why?" asked Jack, his own voice betraying the excitement the girl's words brought to him.

"Senor," her voice was almost a whisper, "we are from a poor family in Spain—My sister come to this country a little girl—She grow up like the American girl—She get smart and beautiful—My aunt write my mother that Carmen is not like us—She has strange men friends with money—I come to this country two years ago. I see my sister in fine clothes—in fine places—I work in a house—My sister never work—she gamble—she get men into trouble—She have schemes——"

"How did you know I was to meet her here tonight?" cut in Jack, his mind going around in circles, and his confidence in his judgment somewhat shaken.

"She brag to me she meet a nice young man tonight—to make him do something very dangerous with her—maybe lots of money—maybe not—maybe someone get killed—she say he is handsome man, but have no money—he save her from falling off the horse—Ah! Senor, beware, my beautiful sister she has many tricks——"

"Tricks—Do you think the runaway horse was a trick?" interrupted Traven.

"Sh-h-h—Senor—you must talk quiet—Any moment she come—She hurt me maybe if she know I come—The horse maybe a trick—I do not know—Be careful, I implore you—I must go Senor—My sister leave the house at ten o'clock with a man. She come to here now—Ugh!" she shuddered again as if a sudden chill of fear had swept over her.

The sound of footsteps approaching hurriedly from the Plaza entrance to the park was distinctly audible. The girl turned to Traven quickly and pointed in the direction of the Plaza:

"My sister—she come—I must fly—Beware Senor—Beware——" with these dramatic words she turned about and half ran down the gravel path that wound its way deeper into the trees and the night shadows of the park.

JACK stood rooted to the spot. He could hear the girl who had warned him crunching the gravel as she hurried away. He also heard footsteps approaching nearer and nearer from the Plaza end of the rustic path. His brain refused to function normally. His limbs and muscles felt as if a paralysis had suddenly crept over them.

There is going to be a thrilling one act play, in next week's MIDNIGHT

Watch for it—

The title is

"Thieves"

"Snap into it," he told himself, trying to get a grip on his swirling thoughts and inert body. "Either you stay and see it out, or you beat it. You haven't got time to figure out what it's all about now. Is it stay, or run—?"

In a twinkling the decision was made. He would stay!

"Queer business," he thought as the footsteps came nearer, "A beautiful girl half asks me to kill a man. Because I like her I promise to meet her here—and go on a man and money hunt—up comes this girl—says she's her sister—she warns me—gosh!——"

A swish of silk interrupted his thoughts. In a second he was all alertness, waiting and watching with pounding pulses.

In the half-light of the midsummer night she floated to him like a thing of fragrant gossamer beauty, setting his emotions on fire. His fascinated eyes turned blind to all else except the dark lustre of her hair, the alluring depths of her eyes, her kissable mouth, her perfect arms that gleamed white beneath the shimmering black satin cape, and the feminine slenderness of her body, half-concealed, and yet half-revealed by the subtle draperies of an old rose dress.

"I'm so sorry," her voice was more like music than ever, "to have kept you waiting——. Are you still willing to help me?" her question was a challenge.

"Yes——" replied the man——"but, maybe you would like to know a girl came about an hour ago and warned me against you. She said you were her sister——"

"My sister——" interrupted the girl, a tremor in her voice. "Why, I have no sister—Heavens! We have been watched and followed—Oh! I should have known—This morning in the park—I know it now. I was shadowed there. Our conversation was overheard——"

"Why should you be shadowed—why shou——" asked Jack.

"Because—oh, please let me wait to tell you—It's a long story—trust me. There is danger ahead. But there is a chance to escape it—a chance to make lots of money—and a chance to help me—You won't desert me now?" she implored, taking hold of his hands impulsively.

"No—not that—it's only natural I'd like to know something about all of this mysterious business."

"But you trust me?——"

"It looks that way, doesn't it?" asked Jack.

"Yes," she answered, letting go of his hands, "I am so glad——" for a moment she paused and then went on in a voice that seemed afraid of its own velvety softness. "Follow me to the Plaza. Wait at the east entrance facing Fifth Avenue. When I come out follow me again and get in the front seat of my car beside my chauffeur. He knows you are coming. Do it quickly and quietly."

"What's next?" inquired Traven.

"You promised to trust me——" she began.

"Fair enough, I do. Will there be any shooting after we get started in the car. Or does that come later?"

"That I do not know myself—Promise you'll be on your guard."

"I'll be on the job every second—Now, what about that shooting iron you promised?"

"Sh-h-h—I brought you a small automatic. I did not dare bring more than one. Oh! I nearly forgot—is there anyone to be told in case—I mean—" she could not seem to find the words or the nerve to say more.

"You mean if I accidentally get in the way of a bullet?"

"Y—e—s," she faltered.

"Don't worry about that—I haven't got a soul left any more." His words brought a change to her face. For a few passing seconds she was no longer the girl of mystery and adventure. Soft lights were in the depths of her eyes. In the pressure of her fingers there was something that suggested understanding and sympathy.

"Give me the gun," he said, "and we will start out."

With a swift movement of her right hand she drew forth a gleaming poinard. As its silver-like blade flashed in the night spaces he heard her saying:

"This is for me—in case it comes to that," with a quick flourish she put it away, "and this," whispered the girl, pushing a small revolver towards him "is for you."

He took it gingerly.

"It's fully loaded," she whispered under her breath.

"Right-o. I'm all set. Let's go," he whispered back.

Once more their hands touched and their glances met. A warm pressure of fingers, a final interchange of looks, and they moved stealthily towards the Plaza in the deepening shadows of night.

* * * * *

After a long hour Traven was somewhat relieved to see the girl appear on the Plaza steps. A few moments of careful survey and she walked towards a large Packard limousine which had noiselessly drawn up to the curb. Without making it too obvious Jack hurried after her.

A liveried chauffeur handed her into the machine. As the car started Jack hopped on the running board and climbed into the front seat.

"There is a car following us—speed, Jackson—speed," commanded the girl through the speaking tube. Jackson stepped on the gas and the big car shot ahead with a fresh burst of power. Looking behind, as the machine swerved into Fifth and darted downtown, Traven saw a taxicab trailing them. He put his hand to his hip pocket. The pistol was safe there.

ON and on sped the humming Packard. There was little or no traffic to interfere. Fifth Avenue, deserted of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, was a long, wide sweep of private race course. The street lights flashed by like a continuous stream of white ribbon. Reading the speedometer with quick eyes Jack saw the needle indicating close on to fifty miles an hour.

"Turn into East Twenty-ninth——" commanded the girl through the tube as the car dashed by the signal tower at Forty-second Street. The chauffeur took the Twenty-ninth Street turn on two wheels.

(*Continued on page 22*)

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flirting at 60 miles an hr.

A Trip on a Limited Train with one of the world's most daring lady killers

IN all my ten years of railroading with a grip full of varnish and paint samples, I can only remember one trip that did not offer me a choice tid-bit of Pullman flirtation. As a regular thing the sleepers always carry a fresh and choice stock of alluring femininity which once away from the restraints of home, family and gossipy tongues, warmly welcome a little social adventure as the telegraph poles whiz by.

I'm not talking about wild women. They'll welcome dangerous meetings with strangers any time on Pullmans or otherwise. I'm speaking of honest-to-goodness ladies who don't really mean any harm by flirting with strange men on cars—girls who are from the best families—girls with money, education and their names in the social register.

I've met them all—every type on a Pullman train. And I've had my fun. Harmless fun, lots of it, of course. Then again, fun with a bit of danger in it. There's always danger in the offing when there are sparks. Some men and women are just like sparks to one another. That's when you've got to be careful. That is, if you want to be careful.

Most people believe that "drummers," traveling men, and so forth, are great hands at telling stories. That seems to be a part of our business. And when it comes to yarns about our own adventures, especially with the fair sex, we are supposed to be past-masters in the gentle art of weaving. I want to state right here and now that there may be lots of windjammers among the knights of the grip. But most of us do not lie in our stories. We only exaggerate the truth. Our hotel lobby and Pullman smoking-room tales may sound like flights of the imagination but most of them are true. When we tell a gang about the wonderful girl we met on the Wolverine who thought we were capitalists, millionaires, or something better, and invited us to their mansion on the lake shore front—well, there's often much more truth than poetry in such recitations, believe me.

Six weeks ago I had to shoot out to the coast by way of Chicago. I boarded my train at the Grand Central at nine. Most of the berths in my car were already made up. I didn't feel a bit like sleeping. It was sultry and I was wide awake. For a while until we got in motion I fiddled around in the smoking room. There were two other men in the smoker with me, but they were not interesting.

If you travel at all frequently you will realize how true it is that one of the first things to be done after getting settled on your train or ship is to look the passengers over and see if you like any of them well enough to meet them. If, for instance, you spot an intriguing young beauty, your next step is to scheme out some way and means of getting next to her.

Before retiring to the smoker I had made a careful appraisal of the people in my car. Two old ladies, a schoolmarm type of woman, a pair of giggling

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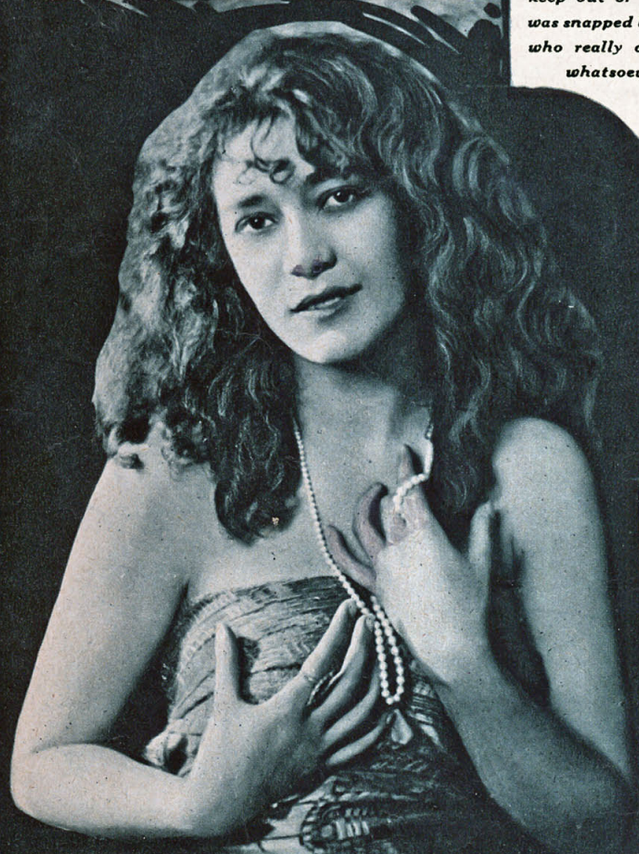
Who has the Arms in

Among the charming young ladies whose affections King Alphonso has alienated is Miss Coronne Paynter. Her far-away expression probably indicates that she is figuring on going over to Spain herself to give the King a piece of her mind. This photograph was taken by Brugueire, who probably has one of the best jobs in the world.

To the right you will observe Miss Della Vanna, with modest downcast countenance, holding up, with her charming arm, what is very likely about one million dollars' worth of pearls. We don't know what Miss Vanna is contemplating, but we should say that the King had better keep out of her way. This photograph was snapped by Mr. Tornello, a gentleman who really ought to receive no money whatsoever for such a sinecure.



Dorothy Arnold looks pensively at us from the page and wonders, perhaps, if it is true that the King really did make that remark. She can hardly believe that a King could be so ungallant.

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most beautiful America

We would not want to be the party who told Julia Silvers that American girls didn't have pretty arms. We feel sure that Julia's proud and haughty expression would completely overwhelm us, and besides that we are married anyway, so what's the use of getting into a lot more trouble. Julia, as well as the other young ladies on this page, is with the Greenwich Village Follies, an aggregation of talent and pulchritude that has just hit Broadway, and we should say has hit it hard.

Mr. Hesser, the photographer, is a handsome gentleman wearing horn-rimmed glasses. We don't envy him his good looks because we are good-looking ourselves, but we do think we might once in a while have the privilege of taking a picture like these of Marjorie Peterson and Harriet Gimbel. Marjorie is the haughty person to the left who is addressing the King as follows: "How do you get that way?", and Harriet is the reflective young lady to the right whose costume consists of one piano scarf and a diamond ring.

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Flirting at Sixty Miles an Hour

(*Continued from page 15*)

flappers who were not good looking enough to be interesting, and a married couple made up the crop.

The night run to Chicago promised to be both dull and dismal. It became so warm and stuffy in the smoking compartment by the time we reached Harmon and exchanged our electric engine for an oil burner that I wandered thru the two last cars and found a comfortable wicker chair on the observation platform. I was all alone. Evidently no one else on the whole darn train was minding the sultriness of the evening.

Miles and miles of gleaming steel rails flashed by. I sat there smoking and watching the shadows of the starlit night as they cloaked the woods and sleeping little towns we rushed past. I was not exactly lonely but I kept telling myself it was just the kind of night for a man or woman to be a bit sentimental and all of that. I wished for company, preferably, of course, a good looking woman.

My wish was soon rewarded. I heard the screen door open and close gently behind me. Looking around I saw a tell, slender girl dressed in a sort of loose silk kimona. At least, I was sure it was not a regular street dress. She hesitated before choosing a seat. I think that after seeing me she felt a little embarrassed. I made no move one way or the other. I simply sat there looking after the vanishing rails. But as I sat there I felt a warm desirous kind of fire creeping thru my veins. I felt like I wanted to talk to her. She interested me.

I guess a half an hour passed before I got courage enough to speak, although during that time our eyes had met several times, and she did not seem the kind to want to scare a fellow away. But, there was something unusual, distinguished and aloof about her which kept my tongue quiet a long time. Finally I heard her strike a match. She was going to light a cigarette. I saw her out of the corner of my eyes. Just as the match flared up and she bent down to light her weed a puff of wind put the tiny flame out.

That was my cue.

I offered her a match. She smiled very sweetly. In the semi-darkness of that observation platform I could see she was a beauty. The dressing gown of silk and laces made her look like a picture. I took her in from head to foot with one swift glance.

"Terribly stuffy inside," she said, indicating the cars.

"I couldn't stand it," I answered. And then from a few remarks about the night's beauty we got talking about other things. Shortly I was sitting alongside of her in my own chair. She was a very cultured woman and I judged her to be wealthy. I am a college man and I keep up with everything pretty well, so our conversation was very general. The motion of the train plus our own inclinations, I suppose, gradually brought our arms in contact. The touch of that woman was electrical to me—like a pleasant shock. She did not seem to mind. Little by little our fingers met on the side arms of our chairs. Very soon we were speeding thru the night holding hands. I do not know what impelled her to allow this familiarity on my part. Perhaps it was the spell of the romantic night—the idea of being away from everybody she knew—the fact that I was a stranger.

Certainly she was not the kind of girl who was a promiscuous flirt. Something in her eyes told me that. But, she did not forbid me when I put my arm around her. A warmth surged over me as my hands felt the softness of her silk gown and the velvety touch of her young body. Once she disengaged herself and turning upon me looked straight into my eyes. I thought she was going to bless me out. However, she didn't. Instead of that the girl leaned back against me and when I put my arms around her again I found her lips lifted up towards mine.

It was past two o'clock before she sensed the fact that a man and woman cannot kiss one another for a long, long time without bringing some element of danger into their romance. While still in my arms she wriggled free and with a panting little breath begged me to let her go. She said she had to go in for a few moments but she would return. I let her go.

Thirty minutes passed. . . . An hour. . . . I knew then that she would not return. She had decided, I suppose, that the night's adventure was over. It had taken on too many possibilities! I went to my berth and fell asleep, warm as it was. I never saw the girl again.

On the next lap to the coast I was walking thru my car to the diner when I saw a very attractive girl all alone in a drawing room. She was playing solitaire. Quite by accident, I am sure, she looked up as I passed by. Her blonde hair and blue eyes lured me. I sort of half paused, uncertain as to what I should do. She was alone and apparently bored with being alone.

"Like rummy?" I asked, but not in a brazen voice. A fellow doesn't get far with strange girls unless he affects a certain kind of pose in voice as well as manners.

"How did you know?" she asked.

"I'm the man who made ouija boards," I laughed. So did the girl. By that time I was in her compartment. Without any more ado we played rummy. I found out she was going to get off at Denver. It was her home town. Later we went to the dining car together and lunched. I told her I was in the motion picture business and bound for Hollywood. By the way, I never tell them I'm a traveling man. They seem to be leary of traveling men. We got on famously.

Before dinner she had invited me to visit her in Denver. That night was spent out on the observation platform. I did not think she would stand for any petting, so I was almost too formal to be happy that night. However, before we reached Denver I had kissed her a few dozen times and she was calling me "dear." I stopped off in her town for two days, she fascinated me so much. Believe me I had a royal time with her for she was one of the society girls.

My most intriguing Pullman car adventures have been with married women. Lots of married girls off on a vacation from their hubbies, or taking a shopping trip to the larger cities, are always keen for a little party, according to my experiences. On my way to Jacksonville, Florida, last fall I had a section opposite the one occupied by two good looking and expensively dressed girls. They were not at all particular as to how they exposed their silk-clad limbs. Being just a mere man I glanced their way several times. Finally, one of them caught me in the act and laughingly told the other.

Guiltily, but with a sense of humor which is a great help to me both in business and pleasure, I smiled. We all smiled and pretty soon we were in conversation. I found out they were the wives of Naval officers. One expected to meet her husband that night in Charleston. The other's husband would be in that port two days later.

Although we three were together all of the time I managed to get in a few words to the girl whose husband was not due in Charleston for two days. We made a date to meet that night in Charleston unknown to her friend, as I promised to get off the train after they did. I have never quite for, gotten the fascination of that Lieutenant-Commander's wife.

One night on the run from Montreal down to New York I was standing in the aisle of the car in front of my lower, clad only in a pair of silk pajamas when a girl stuck her bobbed and curly head out of the berth across the way and asked the time. Perhaps she thought I was the porter at first. I told her the time, and that we were going to be one hour late. She wanted to know if we had passed the border, and if there was any danger of prohibition agents searching the passengers' baggage. It seemed mighty brazen to be standing up in a car in my pajamas talking to a girl in a nightgown who was sitting up in her berth with the curtains parted. But on a train anything is likely to happen. So I sat on the edge of her berth and told her what I thought about the chances of smuggling liquor in and out of Canada. She gave me a good drink of Scotch before I had been there three minutes. It wasn't hooch either. It was the real stuff. I found out she had made a bet with another girl that she could get away with smuggling a couple of bottles into the country. She only took a wee bit of it herself. Later, I said good night as casua ly as if we were parting on the street, and then went to sleep only three feet from where she was lying down in a silky gown which had revealed a great deal of her figure to me as I sat on her berth.

Say, I could tell you a hundred experiences with girls and women on the Pullmans. I board a Pullman with the anticipation of finding adventures and I never get disappointed. Sometimes these affairs are only passing, momentary things that while away a few hours. Other times they are deeper things like the affair I had with the Navy man's wife at Charleston.

There's something funny about the germ that gets in women's blood once they board a train, or a ship. They become adventurers—they forget the drawing-room conventions. They are flirts, willing in most cases to meet a man half-way. At least that's the way I've found them.

I guess we all get a little kick out of doing something that's not quite right—something that holds an element of the unknown—a little risk. That's what Pullman flirtations really amount to, for no matter how innocently they may start, each and every one has amazing possibilities.

Friend wife jumped down my throat the other day because I refused the firm's offer of a good paying home office job. Taking that job meant a lot to wifey; for instance—ham and eggs with me three hundred and sixty five mornings out of every year—somebody to drag her to all the movies and the dances—somebody to pick on when the cook left or the vacuum sweeper went on strike, and a thousand other big and little things.

But, I couldn't see taking a swivel chair job after spending the last ten years making all of the big towns in the country with the best line of paints and varnishes that was ever peddled. I know it was selfish not to take the home office position. I've got a hunch that Mabel thinks so too. God help me, though, if her thoughts go as far as mine. If so there'll be small arms target practice in my family and I'll be the bull's eye.

"Henry, you're the funniest, queerest and hardest man to understand in all creation," she stormed like most of our better halves do when they don't agree with us. "A week ago you wrote me you were sick of bumpy Pullmans, hotel rooms and wanted home cooking. Now you get the chance to live like a regular man at home and you refuse it! Oh I'm heartbroken——" went up the wail.

I gnashed my teeth silently. Then I tried to tell her gently that there was a chance of making more money on the road.

"You can buy a new squirrel coat on the contract I'm going to get from Mason in Chicago, or a brand new Hudson coach——"

"I don't want a new squirrel coat or a darned old coach——" she cut in like a cyclone swinging out of course, "I want a real home—a real husband—not a home on the installment plan with a visiting husband. I'm sick and——"

About that time I made a dive for the side door and the lawn. Mabel would have gone into salty tears if I had remained any longer—and, ye gods, how I hate crying women.

All you wifey souls who read this will give me a straight ticket to that place reserved in after life for mean, selfish and erring husbands. But, brethren, you fellow sufferers in the vineyard of matrimony, I know you'll understand and cheer for me in your secret hearts even if you read these hard lines over the missus' shoulder.

Brother, how could I tell the dear lady who bears my name and spends my income the naked truth and nothing but the naked truth about this traveling

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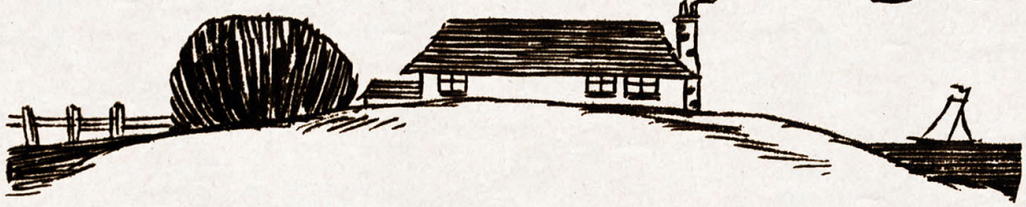
the Lure of the Love Nest



James A. Stillman, whose alleged nest-making exploits led to a domestic breach that rocked two continents.

No—it isn't the kind love builds; it's the kind lust builds. And here are some pertinent reflections on the subject.

LIKE a great merciless searchlight the divorce courts recently revealed that many men way up in social, club and financial circles have been keeping mistresses in all the lavish splendor of a European court, and all the voluptuous opulence of an Oriental harem. One has only to recall the prominent names that furnished the country with scandal aplenty during the past few months in order to confirm this statement.

But, rich and aristocratic men are not the only ones who build love nests. It is not an impulse peculiar to rich men only that demands the possession of forbidden women to add spice and variety to days and nights.

In a much more tragic and minor key the same divorce courts that have exposed the existence of love nests in the lives of the rich and mighty have also echoed the stories of humble love nests—nests that lacked all of the finery and gilded environment of wealth—but, for all of that, nests built and feathered by the same natural promptings of man.

The lure of the clandestine love nest is just as irresistible to the clerk at thirty dollars a week, or the salesman at one hundred dollars per week as to the multi-millionaire.

There is ample reason for this. Love nests are built because it is a part of the nature of man to want to build them after he tires of wife and HOME. Again, man has taught himself to believe it is not such a terrible thing after all for him to color his life with the love of several women instead of one.

Let us look to human facts to prove this.

While it was costing James A. Stillman, prominent banker and clubman, over one million dollars to upholster his secret love nest with the soft loveliness of Florence Leeds, a former chorus girl, John Dawson a Brooklyn delicatessen clerk with a wife and two children was contributing thirteen dollars a week of his thirty-five income to support a ribbon counter girl. That Stillman spent such a fabulous amount on a woman with whom he did not dare walk up Fifth Avenue in broad daylight is amply substantiated by a host of cancelled checks, sale slips, and other evidences of expenditures all of which were made to cast more and more glamourous lure about the beautiful young body of a girl who fascinated him. Dawson was found dead one morning from suicide. A note in his pocket admitted his inability to make a go of both HOME and LOVE NEST.

That there was an irresistible impulse in Stillman's blood to surround the former chorus beauty with every luxury his millions could buy is not to be doubted when we realize all he did to make their love nest a warm, colorful background for the unlawful romance it sheltered.

From a cheap boarding house in the Times Square district to a forty-five thousand dollar apartment on exclusive and fashionable Park Avenue was quite an overnight jump for a girl of the chorus. But Florence made it without any mishap. In order to decorate the apartment to suit her tastes, and to harmonize with his own wishes, Stillman spent $17,500. When it was finished, and Florence Leeds moved in, she walked over rugs that had cost the women of Bagdad many long and laborious hours of hand weaving—rugs that were fit for a queen to treads much less a banker's mistress. She bathed in scented sunken baths of gleaming marble straight from the Carrara quarries of Italy. She slept in costly Irish linens. She covered her slim young self with all of the silken finery Stillman's money could buy. Maids answered her beck and call. They dressed her, fed her and beautified her so she might be fresh for the man who came when New York slept to find in her caresses that which his gold had helped to purchase.

As for the poor unfortunate girl who brought love to the humble Flatbush nest built by the hands and paltry dollars of John Dawson, she knew nothing of luxury in her secret life with the delicatessen clerk. There were no silk dresses; no pearls; no glittering diamonds. No hardwood floors; no sunken tubs, or motor cars to add glamor to her affair. It was just sheer human nature that brought them together, human nature stripped bare of the panoply of wealth; human nature dominated by a passion which these two were blind enough to call love.

By day she toiled in the oppressive air of a second-class department store. She had no clean right to think of what the end of day would bring. She was not married to the man who came slinking to her in the night shadows, fearing the eyes of all the world. She did not go home from work. She went to a love nest to be the companion of a lover—not a husband. She cooked and ate in the same room. She lived and slept in another. John Dawson helped pay for the two rooms, and the food, because it was his love nest.

IN that division of society known as the "great middle class" where men are neither millionaires or paupers, there have been countless divorces because of the Love Nest. In New York City alone, where apartment houses accommodate hundreds of people who are all strangers, there are thousands of these middle class love nests which business men, professional men and others keep for the sheltering of attractive women who have a price.

If you are skeptical of this statement ask any friend who lives in a New York apartment if there are any suspicious women living in his building. I do not mean out and out prostitutes. They are so obvious as to be detected and kicked out at once. I refer to what is commonly known as "kept women." That is, girls and young women whose rent bills, food bills, and so forth are all settled on the quiet by one man. I wager that eight out of ten men will answer in the affirmative.

The love nests of the bourgeios class do not receive the same amount of public attention and notice when exposed as do similar scandals affecting the higher crust of social life. This is, of course, very natural. We easily forget how John Smith was divorced by his wife for keeping a manicure girl in a modest apartment on 110th Street but we will always remember Peggy Marsh's affair with Henry Field, 2nd. Peggy, a dainty dancer in London demanded that young Field, one of the sons of the late Marshall Field, marry her and give her son the right to the famous Field name.

The Marsh-Field affair was the culmination of a youthful passion that would not accept the barriers of social caste and financial class. Peggy Marsh was a dancing girl. Henry Field was a son of Chicago's great merchant prince. It was futile for them to think of marriage. Not being able to build a Home they fashioned a clandestine love nest where the young American millionaire could fathom the fascinating mystery and beauty of the show girl.

For all of her colorful days of pleasure, romance and riches with a scion of the Field family, Peggy found that the love nest she feathered with her subtle feminine charms had not been feathered financially by her lover. For this reason she left London, and with her child, Henry Anthony Field Marsh made a desperate attempt in American courts to recover money for him. The man she claimed as her child's father had already married Nancy Perkins of Virginia, and died five months afterwards. It was his estate that she tried vainly to partially recover for her baby. Since that time Peggy Marsh has married.

NOW, on the heels of these cases comes the tragic cry of Evans Burrows Fontaine, the dancer, who charges "Sonny" Whitney with being the father of

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her child whom she has named Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney. If you read this stage girl's story, written by her own Mother and published in the August MIDNIGHT, you ought to know what a Love Nest has cost Evan.

From a forbidden romance which blossomed and bloomed in a love nest fashioned by the unthinking hands of mad Desire, there has come the pathetic little figure of the Fontaine child to take his place in a world that looks with shame and embarrassment upon its illegitimate children. He does not know what it is all about now. Nor will he know for many years to come. But, if he could be told and made to understand, the simplest explanation would be that his mother, like Florence Leeds, had foolishly upholstered with her young body the nest a man built off the public highways of Life, and never expected to call his HOME.

Peggy Marsh's sad, financial experience is in direct contrast with that of Florence Leeds. The great jewelers of Fifth Avenue and Continental Europe knew her well. Tiffany's, Cartier's and Dreicer's plied their art that she might walk before her lover adorned with the glitter of rare and costly gems. James A. Stillman, according to an accurate tabulation of jewelry bills which was made by the courts, spent over $150,000 in two years for baubles that fascinated his mistress' eyes and enhanced her own charm to him.

After outfitting his Park Avenue nest lavishly the banker secured another apartment on East Eighty-Sixth Street which for a long time served as their nightly rendezvous. In this apartment the exotic opulence of the East mingled with the luxury of the West. Rich tapestries fetched from Damascus. exquisite lace draperies from Brussels, rare lamps blown and hand-painted in the glass and porcelain shops of Constantinople, unique Etruscan pottery, tiger skins cured and mounted along the road to Mandalay, and Persian rugs inches thick were gathered there to bring beauty and charm to the substitute home pattern woven by Florence Leeds and James A. Stillman in a tempest of passion. It was here amidst all of this luxury and false glitter that Jay Leeds was born of an unwed mother to take his unknowing little place in a world that will always look at him askance, and remember the name of his father without giving him that name. Although Stillman, banker and clubman, claimed Florence Leeds for his wife, no law of church or State was ever invoked to sanction the life those two lived together.

In many other cases of wealthy men building clandestine love nests it has come to light they used such places for the purpose of entertaining many beautiful and attractive women who charmed them for the moment. When the women failed to make the love nests fascinating to their owners, they were put out and successors brought in.

One man with craft and cunning bought a steam yacht and used it for a love nest. Stillman did the same thing.

Bags of gold were emptied to make it one of the handsomest pleasure crafts that ever sailed the seas. It was a veritable floating palace. As a trysting place for lawful or unlawful love, this vessel was a dream place where the romancers were cast against a background of richness that goes to one's head like rare old wine. Aboard this ship, according to the testimony of a sailor formerly employed by the owner, there were parties where champagne flowed like water, and revelry such as men and women know at midnight, and far into the early hours of day, often went on.

Off shore, under the fixed stars of Heaven, but beyond the ken of spying human eyes, the love nest yacht cruised many a night like a swift magnificent greyhound of the sea bearing this Croesus and the young woman who decked herself in his silks and satins. To the other ships that passed her in the night she perhaps showed only running lights of gleaming yellow, green and red. But the lack of brilliant electrical incandescence was only a ruse for in the salon of carved and paneled walls and in the gorgeous lounging room there were often scenes to rival those in the royal galleys of the mighty Caesars that slaves once studded with gems and inlaid with gold. There were sumptuous feasts of food and drink, sensuous music, soft, shaded lights, sparkling jewels, perfume and all of the things that intoxicate both men and women, as she cleft her way through the green waters.

Asked what is the oldest institution in the world a great many persons will answer, "THE HOME." The answer is approximately correct.

As a rule man builds his home first. He erects it out upon the open highways for all the world to see. He makes it attractive. He peoples it with with new little faces. Life rushes by smoothly, or roughly, but always swiftly. His home is a safe anchorage against the speeding current. He should not cut the cables that mean safety. But there is something fascinating and impelling in the glamor of Life's rushing sparkling waters. It is a mixture of danger, uncertainty, his home's anchorage.

Generally he finds a new interest in the lure of a woman other than his wife. There is both danger and uncertainty in such an amour. Then he commences the building of a LOVE NEST—a place fashioned in secrecy and entered only in the deep shadows of night. He builds cautiously, cleverly, and aloof from the laws of convention so he may find the calms and passions of life in the arms of his forbidden woman.

There are plenty of other reasons besides a man's general inclination to seek new adventures in life that are sometimes responsible for his desertion of home in favor of an unlawful Love Nest. In most cases the man has had his own personal reason for so doing. With one man it may be because his wife does not understand him; another may think his wife unfaithful; a third may feel he has lost all love for his wife because she makes no attempt to hold him; a fourth may simply fall in love with a new woman and so on go the reasons.

If it were not for the fact that the HOME and the LOVE NEST are two conflicting forces in a man's life we would never know of the latter's existence. It is only when these two forces collide that the Love Nest is revealed. And, when the collision occurs it is the divorce court that drags the nest and its inmates from its shadowed and guarded spot into the full glare of public knowledge.

Yes—yes—I am sure there will never be any place like home. The home was built first. But, believe me the LOVE NEST will run a close second even if it is contrary to the laws of God and man. It should not have a place in our scheme of life. However, its lure has proved too strong for man to resist. He has been building them for centuries and in all likelihood he will continue to do so.

The Editor of Midnight Obliges an inquiring reader!

AS district secretary of a national fraternal order the writer is quite often called upon to entertain visiting members and delegates from out of town, who desire to see things that they have been led to believe can only be found in the great City, such as dancing exhibitions where men only are usually admitted and beauty can be seen unadorned, and yours truly being ignorant of the existence of such places, they are naturally disappointed.

Am led to believe that there are joints run under cover, where such attractions are part of their stock in trade and as you in your extensive travels may have become aware of them, may I not ask you to kindly impart the information of their whereabouts to your grateful correspondent. The address of a good road house would also be appreciated.

L. B. M.

OUR correspondent is correct. There are joints such as he mentions right here in New York City.

While the Editor of MIDNIGHT may be observed, on occasion, partaking of a frugal, though nourishing noon-day luncheon, at a one-arm chair hamhashery near Times Square; though he may be seen, almost any evening strolling casually and publicly up Broadway in full view of the audience—he has his moments, the same as anyone else, when he is "forgetting and by the world forgot."

If L. B. M. would spend a wild evening with the visiting members of his fraternal order, we can suggest no better place for an orgy than a certain old brown-stone, moss-covered building where the waters of the lower bay ceaselessly lap and purr at the foundations as if to undermine them.

There he will find both males and females disporting themselves in nature's own garb, totally oblivious of the curious gaze of the beholder. He and his fraternalites may go in this place when they please, stay as long as they like and come out when they get good and ready.

IF he has more time to spare, he might visit a hostelry at the foot of East Thirty-fourth Street. There he will find as unusual a collection of outcasts from human society as was ever gathered together in one place. Grizzled old night prowlers, one-eyed and vicious; the soft, seductive glance of the wanton; the ponderous, sad-eyed dignity of the total failure in life's list; the furtive, the hungry, the diseased, the crippled—all there, on view, to furnish a Roman saturnalia for our good friend and his gay companions.

Should L. B. M.'s capacity for thrills be undiminished, there remains yet another place.

He will descend into the underworld.

Here it was, only the other night, that a sleeping man was robbed while he loitered overlong on a convenient bench. Here it was, too, not so long ago, that a mad lover shot his love-lost lady while her four year old child clung to her skirts; here it was that hundreds of innocent men, women and children were gassed by deadly fumes. Every day, in this underworld, there are things happening that "baffle description," after a manner of speaking. Here he will find greed, passion, envy and avarice reduced to its lowest terms.

YOU ask for the address of a good road-house. There is no such thing as a "good" road-house. It is doubtful if that sort of a road-house could exist twenty-five minutes in our civilization.

And anyway, road-houses do not have addresses. They just happen.

You might motor up Pelham Parkway and let nature take its course.

Yes, L. B. M. you have come to the right place.

The fact that the first mentioned is the Aquarium, that the second is the public dog-pound and the third the subway detracts nothing at all from the value of the information itself.

We thank you.

Come again.

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Is Your husband married?

An amusing speculation

By Charles W. Wood

There are novels on the market today that no married man should be permitted to read. One of them is mentioned very ably by Mr. Wood in this extraordinary presentation of one aspect of a great social problem.

However, our own American authors are not at all backward about discussing the marriage relation intimately, and one of the most foremost is Joseph Hergesheimer, whose picture appears above. Mr. Hergesheimer is among the younger American novelists, and his latest book, "Cytherea," is one that few married women can read with delight—and few married men should be permitted to read it at all.

THE married man has at last got into literature. This is an important bit of news; for as soon as any particular type gets into literature it gradually passes out of life.

There was the Clinging Vine, for instance. The Clinging Vine was once a fact; but she got into the story books and where is she today? And then there was the Servant Girl who married the Prince. It took a whole generation of literature to extinguish her, but there isn't a case on record for several years now when any servant girl in real life has done any such thing. One by one all the other types were written up and disappeared; the Villain, the Tyrant, the Fat Policeman, the Cub Reporter who solved the mystery after all the stars fell down—what vivid realities they all were until someone shoved them into literature! And now literature has set out to write up the Married Man!

All the books used to wind up with marriage but they never said anything about it. "They married and lived happily ever after," was all they could report. I'm not hinting that the type who performed that trick has also become extinct. They weren't types. As single men, they were of various types, and their married state was mentioned as a mere abstraction. But the books of today start out with the ominous tolling of the wedding bells. You know from the first note that something terrible is going to happen. It does. The story of matrimony in all its grewsome details follows.

Take "If Winter Comes," for instance. I speak of that not because it was better or worse than a lot of the others but because I happened to pick it up first. I was fresh and was able to read quite a distance before I threw up the sponge. The story of the Married Man is a sure enough knockout. I'm generally knocked out in about the fifth chapter; or if not actually knocked out, I become as exhausted as the leading characters. I've seen married men in real life but I never appreciated what a tired lot they are until I began to read about them in books. At blocking and side-stepping some of them show a little skill, but it isn't in them to stand up and fight. I can understand now the peaceful polyandry of Thibet. There isn't an ounce of fight in a whole he-harem.

BUT these stories do not refer to polyandry. They begin, I say, with some hapless hero on the day that a powerful female commits monogamy upon him. Within a few months the bonds of matrimony skip their first dividend. After that, day by day, year in and year out, marital values fall. The hero has no punch, but he's hell on taking punishment. He sticks it out for years and years. His goddam wife, it seems, doesn't understand him. He is eventually crushed. He lapses into second childhood. And in the final chapter, just to illustrate the immensity of the ruin, the feeble-minded chap ups and marries again.

The stories are popular, there's no doubt of that. There's a reason. Ask Pop the Publisher—he knows. It's like the story of the dishwasher who married the prince. Pop didn't know anything about princes, but he knew that dishwashers hated like hell to wash dishes. But how could they escape from it? There was only one exit, apparently, and that was through marriage. If a prince were to come along and propose, that would solve the difficulty; princes in those days generally had steady jobs and their wages were reasonably high—the only thing about them which it was essential for Pop to understand. Pop therewith ordered one of his faithful literary slaves to fix up a prince; any kind of a prince would do so long as he had a special weakness for dishwashers. Then Pop published the prince, and a million dishwashers throughout the country did the rest. It was a best seller of course. It was a literary orgasm.

NOW it's just like that with the Married Man. The Married Man in real life, of course, cannot escape, but God knows and Pop knows that he wants to. He hasn't the slightest idea where he wants to go; all that is as vague in his mind as were the doings of royalty to the dishwasher. But oh, to end it all! Oh, to be understood! Oh, to be appreciated! In the best sellers of the present season, the long-suffering married men of America are given ample opportunity to appreciate themselves. If you happen to know anything about marriage, you will of course pass up these books as piffle; just as a dishwasher with an understanding of economics would have failed to be impressed with Pop the Publisher's trick. But that is not the point. The point is that there are a lot of married men still extant in these States. They haven't achieved any real emancipation yet but they have got into books. The end is in sight. A little while and ye shall see them no more. Does it not behoove you, dear woman reader, to examine your husband at once and ascertain whether or not he is a Married Man?

A Married Man, according to the accepted definition, is a man who has promised to love, honor and lie to some particular female until death doth them part. He may not express the promise in just that way, but that is what it means. Whatever happens, his wife must not find him out. He is a kind soul and he knows that this would break her heart. He might be attracted by some other woman; there are beasts like that; but if he is, he must never let her know. He mustn't let himself know. If the other woman's presence makes his innards jump over his diaphragm, he must attribute it to something he ate for supper. He's moral, he is. So's the other woman. So's everybody. Whatever pangs he may be called upon to endure, he will never stoop to find out what it all means. So the estimable gentleman runs around in circles, for fifty or sixty pages; and his wife, for some reason or other, thinks he is acting queer. He doesn't mean anything wrong. He is just being pursued by himself and hell bent on not being caught. But with every lap she intercepts his progress and bats him one over the bean. This is what is meant by not being understood.

I ONCE talked with an aged patriarch in China, asking him to explain the marriage system there. A man in China, it seemed, never cursed himself for being married. He never told his wife how much better he could have done. If he thought he could do better, he went out and did it; but in the case of a first marriage at least, neither husband nor wife held it up against each other. They hadn't had

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The Girl Who Paid Fifteen Thousand Dollars for Me

(*Continued from page* 14)

"Turn north into Third Avenue, west into Madison and let us out at Sixty-ninth and Lexington," came the commanding voice of the girl. Jackson nodded, never once taking his eyes away from the road ahead of him.

After a nerve racking ten minutes' ride the car drew up at the designated place. Almost before it stopped the girl flung the door open and was on the sidewalk.

"Hurry—we must not be seen," she said, taking Jack by the coat sleeve. He needed no further invitation. All of his adventurous spirit was now fully aroused. He was ready for anything! In a twinkling he was following her at a mad clip around the corner. In the meantime Jackson had driven away in the opposite direction.

"Thank heaven we lost our pursuers——" panted the girl as she stopped under the lee of a high brownstone wall to catch her breath. "Open the gate in the wall—quick—there, now step inside—I am coming."

After a moment of fumbling with the flat knob Traven turned it and flung the door back. He was looking into a formal garden. For a second only he hesitated.

"Go on," commanded the girl. He stepped through the door and into the garden, the girl right on his heels.

"Shhhhh——" she warned, shutting the door noiselessly, and tiptoeing toward a door at the rear of the mansion. Traven hung close behind. At the door the girl took out a bunch containing many keys. She tried two without success. But the third one turned the lock. Gently she pushed in the heavy door.

"Easy—easy——" her voice was pitched so low he barely heard her. She led him into a dark passageway. He could hardly feel his way, much less see, but the girl seemed to know what she was about so he followed her without a word. Suddenly a tiny wall light flared up revealing a long, narrow hallway.

"All right—I turned it on," explained the girl, pausing a moment as if to listen for sounds upstairs. Everything was as quiet as a tomb.

"Are you all set?" she asked in a smothered voice.

He nodded.

"Then follow carefully and closely. We have to go up two flights of stairs. Don't make a sound more than is necessary." With these words she noiselessly opened a door. Traven looked through the doorway and saw a flight of highly polished stairs before him. Everything was suddenly plunged into darkness. He felt the soft touch of the girl as she brushed by him to lead the way upstairs. Where she was taking him, and for what purpose he was still acutely ignorant. But as the nearness of her fragrant self went to his young head like rich old wine, Jack Traven knew he was following her lead because he wanted to—because he believed in her and was willing to go wherever she asked him to, no matter what the consequences might be.

Cautiously they ascended to what Traven judged to be the first sleeping floor of the house.

"Shhhhh—" warned the girl, "This is where we may be caught—Can you see the faint light ahead?" her voice below a whisper.

"Yes," answered Jack.

"We've got to enter through that chamber to get to the man's bedroom. Get your gun ready——"

"I've got it handy——"

In the stray points of gray light the girl seemed a wraith-like shadow leading him on. Behind her he crossed the threshold of a door. Then he halted in his tracks as she poised herself on tiptoes to listen before advancing. Casting his eyes to the right he was momentarily blinded by the brilliance of glittering gems that seemed to be strewn over a table. He nearly gasped his wonder aloud.

"C-o-me," the girl's voice was softer than ever. He slipped to her side.

"In that room," she motioned to a door that was just discernible in the shadows ahead. "There is a man sleeping—the bed is directly ahead of you as you enter—stand guard with your pistol drawn—I will follow behind you and get what I want—I know where it is——"

Jack Traven with strange tremors running up and down his spine tiptoed into the room, pistol drawn. He was ready for any emergency.

Suddenly a wide flash of yellow light revealed a man standing about fifteen feet away holding a levelled pistol. The flash lasted only a second. Traven barely had time to do more than get a fleeting glimpse of the man with the revolver. Somewhat blinded by the momentary glare, he shut his eyes and fired point blank at the man.

There was a tinkling crash of splintered glass. But no human cry came to tell him he had hit his mark. Crouching in the doorway he pulled the trigger of his automatic again. The hammer clicked metallicly, but there was no sharp crack of exploded powder. The gun had missed fire!

A SECOND later the room was flooded with electricity. In fact, all the rooms adjoining it were suddenly filled with light. Dumbfounded, young Traven looked for the man he had fired at, and for the bed he had expected to find. But there was neither bed, nor man. Instead, he found himself staring into a shattered mirror that had once filled a huge space on the wall opposite him. In its fissured surface he saw, brokenly reflected, the images of the girl in her old rose dress, a tall distinguished looking, elderly gentleman in evening clothes, and himself. The girl was smiling, and the man was nodding his head in evident satisfaction. He turned upon them feeling that he had been made a fool of. With a great effort his flabbergasted ears heard and understood what the girl was saying to the gentleman in evening clothes.

"Isn't he a wonder, dad——He's the man we need——"

"Yes, I am sure he is the right man," answered the man taking the girl's hand.

"It was so thoughtless of me not to ask your name," said the beauty, addressing Jack.

"My name's Jackson Traven, when you are done with all this comic-opera stuff."

"Please now, give me a chance——I want you to meet my father, Colonel de Acosta."

"Colonel de Acosta," echoed Jack, almost incredulously.

"You seem to be familiar with the name. Yes?" asked the elderly gentleman pleasantly as he advanced to take Jack's backward hand.

"Wh —why—you're the great gem collector and owner—the man who bought the jewels belonging to the dead Queen Rita. I thought you were killed by a gang of robbers eight months ago."

"I was supposed to have been killed," supplied de Acosta, "Yes, I am the same, and very much alive now that my wounds have healed——"

"Come in here Mr. Jackson Traven, I want to show you something, and tell you something," commanded the girl. Once more Traven followed her. She led him to the table upon which was heaped in glittering array a great portion of jewels. Dazzled by the sparkling show of stones and scintillating colors, he did not see a small package that the girl indicated with her finger. Finally she picked it up and handed it to him:

"For you," she said simply.

With wondering finger he took the rubber band off the package, and then the paper. Fifteen crisp one thousand dollar bills lay in his hands. He turned to the man and girl.

"Your first year's salary in advance, Mr. Traven, if you will accept the position of accompanying me to Russia to locate, buy and transport back to America the jewels of the dead Czarina—the danger——"

"I accept the job," cut in Jack without letting the collector explain any more.

"Hot dog! I knew you would," cried the girl running up to him and grasping both of his hands. "Do you know that you are the eighth man we have tried out for this position——"

"The eighth man," repeated Jack, "Do you mean——"

"Oh, no, we didn't put them through the same third degree test as we did you—But, something on that order—They all fizzled out—See, I got up this scheme myself—I told Dad he couldn't go after another old diamond if he didn't take an honest-to-goodness American along with him——"

"Then, the whole thing was cooked up?" demanded Jack.

"Y—e—s," replied the girl, "but you're not angry are you?"

"I don't know yet," answered Jack, a mysterious sort of expression around his mouth, "I'll tell you later—When do we start for Russia?"

"As soon as I can get a complete imitation set of the late Czarina's jewels. We must use such a ruse. Until we return no one must know that I am still alive. I am too well known for my own safety. Every crook in the world would be camping on my trail if they thought I was alive now," stated Colonel de Acosta.

THERE were light steps in the hallway beyond the room of jewels. Mr. de Acosta took one step towards the wall and pushed a button. Noiselessly a portion of the wall ascended ceilingwards while at the same moment the table of jewels seemed to slide backwards on invisible tracks into the opening. Three seconds later the wall was in place again with no sign of a break.

"Pardon, Senors, Senorita, supper is served," said a voice that fell familiarly upon the ears of Traven. He looked away from the trick wall and beheld the girl who had warned him in the park a few hours ago. So! she was a maid after all!

"Fine," answered Colonel de Acosta, "we will be right along." The maid disappeared at these words.

"Dad, you run on, I want to ask Mr. Traven one more personal question——"

"Yes—yes—of course," acceded the father.

When he disappeared beyond the threshold of the door, the girl turned upon Traven.

"Why did you say you didn't yet know if you were angry with me?" she asked.

"W-h-y?" he stammered, fencing for time and words, "Er—It's this way—f—if that engagement ring you had on this morning was a part of the scheme—I—I won't be made—"

"And if it was not?"

"Gosh, lady, I'll be a fit subject for Mattewan," blurted Jack brazenly.

"Well, don't worry then. You won't occupy a padded cell this year," she laughed back, "I often wear that ring on my engagement finger just for fun, you know—And, now anything else you want to know?" she asked.

"Lots of things that I'll ask you later, when I get the Czarina's jewels—But, right now, tell me what under the sun made you pick me for this job—What made you think I was all right? That's what seems so illogical to me——"

"Because my horse really ran away with me—and you had nerve to save me as you did—"

"Shucks—that's nothing," returned Jack depreciatingly.

"Yes it is—then, I'll tell you a little secret. When you were chafing my wrists, and so forth, remember?"

"I certainly do," replied Traven as a delicious thought came to his mind.

"Well, once I opened my eyes before you knew

(*Continued on page* 30)

If you think this a thriller--and we'll bet you do--then read "Midnight" in the next issue of "MIDNIGHT." It's a goose-flesh narrative.

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How Naughty Can Some Girls Be And Still Be Nice ?

by T. Howard Kelly,
One of MIDNIGHTS'
best staff writers

"PLAZA 9197?"

"Yes."

"Peggy there?"

"Just a moment, please."

"Hi there, Peggy. How's the girl?"

"Lots of pep, old kid. Didn't kick out of the hay until one o'clock. Out last night with Kay, Rose, Herby, and the rest of that crew. Herby got so shellacked he nearly ran us in a gully. No—it wasn't hooch. It was the real stuff. One of the boys got it off an English ship—What's the dirt down your way?"

"Nothin' much—Heard about Mary Allen and Bill Shattuck tying up last night?"

"—W-h-a-t—Mary and Bill married?—Whew that's a knockout! Elopement?"

"Hell no—Old man Allen made them——"

"So—little Mary's been steppin' on the gas——"

"Heard they went out to some joint two nights ago—about twenty-five miles from town—Claimed the car broke down—Anyhow, didn't show up until after breakfast—Pop Allen arranged the ceremony—You know him—Bet old Bill was scared stiff——"

"Well, that's certainly tough on them both—poor kids. Now Bill can't finish college—Won't his dad rave—Folks will exceed the speed limit—Say—what's on your mind, calling me at this damn time of day?"

"I'm feelin' down in the mouth—How about a little party tonight?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh the Biltmore, or the Montmarte—We can dance awhile——"

"Haven't you got a car now?"

"No, damn it, the folks took the Pierce and Hudson with 'em——"

"Tough, I'll say—well, have you got any oil on the hip?"

"Say Peggy, darn it all, I'm not suggesting a wild party—Fact is, I've got a case of gin and Scotch coming next week but right now I'm dry as an empty well. Can't we get together anyhow?——"

"Oh Jack, you talk like a dumb fish—Imagine any kind of a party in this weather without some likker—and a ride after we leave the Biltmore or—Anyhow I've got a date with Jim, and a fellow from Pittsburgh. They've got Jim's car and a cargo of stuff that just floated in from Cuba—We're goin' to one of the Clubs and end up at an inn Jim's found about twenty miles up in Westchester—Says the jazz there is a knockout—They don't have any prohibitions agents around—and they dance clean through till Sunday noon——"

"Well, if that's the case I'll fade out of the picture——"

"But, Jack, you know I'd break the date for you, old dear, if you just had the car and a little inspiration—What's the percentage stayin' around a hot old hotel all evening——?"

"Thanks,—Say are you all alone——?"

"Yes—and smoking like a factory—Why?"

"I was wondering if you dared bally-ho about likker and parties with the family around——"

"Now, Jack—are you tight? Good Lord! There's nobody here but the maid, and she's a dumb-bell."

As Jack further explained to me he was out of luck so far as staging a party last Saturday evening went. He went on to say.

"These darn girls want us fellows to take out an insurance policy on a good time, or they don't budge nowadays. None of 'em will go along unless there's going to be something to drink—and, believe me half of 'em get sore if you don't end up with a petting party—or——"

"But, Jack is this a wild gang of women you're running around with?" I cut in, wondering if they were all show girls of a fast type, or what. "Are they in your own set?"

"Hell, yes," blurted Jack back at me, "Say, every one of those babies I called up is a NICE GIRL——"

"How about Mary, the one who——" I interrupted.

"Mary? Well, she WAS a nice girl last time I knew her—Guess she still is. Her family's as good as the next. And let me tell you every last one of those six girls I called are in the social register. They're not millionaires, or anything like that. But, they are NICE girls, every damn one of 'em."

Undoubtedly, I told myself, the girls would be somewhat bad and naughty, judged by the standards of old fashioned people and ideals. However, in their own minds, and in the minds of modern people they are very NICE girls for all of their petting parties, their frankness in discussing sex relationships, their audacity in shattering certain conventions, their liquor drinking, their sensuous dancing and cigarette smoking. Being neither an old fogy about how much a girl should not expose of her silken leg, or an ultra-modernist about free-love I will try in a fair and impartial way to show how naughty a girl can be today and still remain nice.

Of course when it comes to being downright naughty, and getting away with it, woman has been running a handicap race with man ever since Adam and his sons invented a speed law for her, and commissioned every other woman and every man in the world to trail her like motorcycle cops. Nobody will dispute the fact that this speed ordinance, which is in reality a moral deadline, has been in vogue ever since Eve took a bite out of the forbidden pippin. Although men can step across that moral deadline, and return unscathed, women and girls can only approach it as far as the standards of their own day allow. Once over that line they are marked with a scarlet A for the rest of their mortal lives. Once they exceed the speed limits they are damned. If they were considered nice before they stepped on the gas and shot across that fateful deadline they are no longer nice the moment both feet go over.

There is no argument about the girl who has once passed that terrible deadline. What we can discuss in this era of hooch, jazz, promiscuous kissing, necking, cheek-dancing, and so forth is—How close to this ages old moral deadline can a girl approach without being clocked and cast into exterior darkness socially, spiritually and otherwise?

Ten years ago it would have been very easy to answer such a question. The speed limit for women was about ten miles an hour. They never got headway enough to reach the moral deadline. A nice girl could do only a few things and still be considered nice. It was one swift bound from the conventions

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of those days to the unpardonable sin in woman. There were no grades which she could take by easy, acceptable stages. There were no delicate shadings between the nice and the bad. There was a clear streak of daylight between the nice girl and that much discussed line. Today it is quite an involved and intricate proposition to rule just how dangerously near a modern sixty-mile-an-hour jazz flapper, or her older sister, can come to toeing that deadline and still remain at least technically NICE.

Ten years ago, or even three or four years ago, the woman or girl who dared smoke a cigarette in public was thought by the vast majority of the American public to belong to an outcast class of women. Our average girl was offended at the very talk of liquor. On most occasions she reprimanded her dance escort if his breath hinted of whiskey, or if his actions openly proclaimed the intoxication of brain and body. Today the average girl feels smart when discussing the relative drinking merits of bootleg, and genuine liquor. And, usually, as in the case of my young friend Jack, she gives a chap the gate, or the air, if he cannot furnish the necessary "oil."

Obviously today is faster than yesterday. The horse and carriage are even too slow for a funeral. Nothing will do but the motor car, or the airplane, would-be reformers and moralists say we are living in a fast and dangerously frank age. It is our speed and frankness that has helped to do away with the streak of daylight between the nice girl and the hopelessly bad, according to them.

Well, what if we are moving faster and speaking franker? Standards are bound to change as the world changes from time to time. It's a far cry from the ante-bellum days when young men asked fathers for permission to call on their daughters, to this 1922 when chaps meet girls, and fifteen minutes afterwards kiss them, or make love to them.

The speed and frankness of the age has not changed one century-old inflexible law of man for woman. It has not wiped out that moral deadline. The line is there today just as it was yesterday. A girl dare not step across it unless she is ready to wear her scarlet letter. In the eyes of the world the sin that the man and unmarried woman commit together is just as damning to the woman now as a thousand years ago. The only thing that has really changed is that a woman can come up to that deadline and almost poise herself upon it, almost peer across at the great forbidden, unknown, and sometimes desirable spaces beyond it, and yet be spoken of as a NICE GIRL.

NOW, has she been real naughty in taking so many dangerous steps, and if so how naughty? Just how bad has she been in making her approach to the forbidden moral curb? Take for example any one of the six girls my young friend Jack vainly called for a date. To begin with he said they are all nice girls of very fine families. In other words they are girls of more than average refinement, culture, education and social position. They are not vulgar, common girls. Most likely they are all good looking and expensively clad girls, for Jack doesn't care a rap about those who do not rate high both in looks and dress. To see this kind of girl riding down Fifth Avenue in a closed machine, or to pass her by on the street, you would at once take her for a girl of an upper class—not a society snob—but, a girl of very nice family, and very comfortable means. She would be typical of the average American girl of the great middle class with perhaps a trifle more finishing polish applied.

Select Peggy. She sounded very interesting. From her phone conversation with Jack we know she is a modern, nice girl, and rather naughty even over the telephone. Let's see how near the danger line she came on that party with Jim and the fellow from Pittsburgh last Saturday night.

Outfitted in an evening costume which left very little to the imagination she met Jim at the door, eager, impatient to be out of a house that seemed to place some restraint upon her young wishes. For instance, her father was continually bawling about her late hours; her mother was fearfully afraid cigarettes would soon bring on consumption, or something terrible; but, neither of these worthies ever did much more than bawl and threaten. They never put their feet down on the things from which they tried ineffectually to restrain her. They contented themselves with remonstrances, and the knowledge that Peggy was like all the other nice girls of her set.

She sat with Jim in the front seat of his closed car, half of her weight resting intimately against his shoulders as the car mixed in the Saturday night traffic of Fifth Avenue. By the time they called for Florrie, the other girl, and her man from Pittsburgh Peggy had burned up four cigarettes, and taken a couple of swigs at Jim's gleaming hip-pocket flask. Not to be outdone Florrie, and the Pittsburgher sampled his flask twice en route.

"There's plenty more of it under the back seat—don't stint yourself," laughed the boy from the Smoky City.

"Don't fret, Fred—those girls have got hollow legs—They'll get away with all they want—We'll probably be bolognied before them—" came from Jim, whereupon both Peggy and Florrie laughed and looked pleased.

Their destination was the Club——. You know the kind of place if you have ever visited the better class of dining and dancing cabarets along the Rialto. Heavy dark curtains with white stripes or some kind of spooky design. Oodles and oodles of tables and a dance platform about as big as a silver dollar. But, the music wakes up the old and senile, and in some cases resurrects the dead. You see lots of old men with young, pretty girls, and lots of young fellows too. There's much suggestive dancing going on, and plenty of liquor. It was in just such a place that Jim and his foursome started their party; conventional in its adherence to the design of similar places, but just about as unconventional in some respects as a dance hall was in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Between cigarettes, the telling of their latest stock of risque stories, the hashing over of Mary Allen's sudden wedding, a consistent storing away of wet goods, and some very intimate poses together on the dance floor the party managed to approach easily and pleasantly what is termed a "loose state occasioned by tightness." Peggy wasn't sure half the time whether she was dancing with Jim or the Pittsburgher,—It felt very pleasant and exhilarating to be swaying about in some man's arms, to be listening to giddy and passionate music, and to be kissed now and then by her dance partner. That was sufficient for the time being.

EVERYBODY else present seemed to be having a good time just like themselves. There were lots of beautiful girls with wonderful clothes that revealed more than half of their fair bodies. One little blonde girl in particular caught Peggy's fancy. She had on a dress with such a deep cut under both arms, and so low in front, until Peggy declared she felt real modest alongside of the blonde. Among the younger girls and men were several acquaintances of Peggy, Jim and Florrie, thus proving that there were plenty of other nice girls present who were smoking, drinking, risque story telling, and so on. Of course it was also obvious that there were some beauties present, who, of for all their faces, figures, clothes and savoir faire were not NICE. Something in their eyes tattled about a trip across that moral deadline. Ah! Do you see where the nice girls and bad girls part company?

Why did George M. Cohan push Fanny Brice off the stage? See next week's Midnight

"But," as Florrie said, "you've got to expect that in this town—You can get away with almost anything here—We know what they are,—and, they know who we are——"

So, you see, it would appear that in a cabaret like the Club——, a nice girl can do the same things, wear the same kind of suggestive, or risque dresses as the girls who are not nice in the final sense of the word, and still stay nice. In other words they can hob-nob with the demimonde, mimic her, perhaps envy her at certain moments, and still keep their nicety if they do not step over that fateful deadline.

Of course everybody does not agree with this idea. In fact a great many old-fashioned, men, women and girls (there are a few of the latter left) will still contend that a nice girl who approximates the half-world girl, or the bad girl, in everything except going the speed limit is not nice. But, the moderns do not demand that long patch of daylight between the nice girl and the bad girl. And, the moderns seem to be holding the trump card because the girls of this new generation are getting away with Peggy's parties every night and are still considered nice, even if in their own secret hearts they own up to being naughty also.

But,—don't think for a minute that Peggy's party stopped at the Club——. It only started there. By twelve-thirty Jim had paid the bill and all four were in the car getting set for a twenty-five mile necking seance to a place Jim described as a wild and wooly joint:

"Why, that's tame in the Club, Fred. Wait till you see 'em wrestling out at this inn——"

"Step on the gas, Jim," begged Peggy, "it sounds like a good show——"

With a couple of swigs from the ever gleaming flasks they were off for the wild inn. On the way up there the only tangible things really between Florrie, and the moral deadline mentioned many times before, were a few beads, some silken straps and the soft material of her scant evening dress, plus whatever ideals of decency Fred had left in him after seven cocktails. Peggy and Jim were somewhat handicapped in their approach to the moral hurdle by the necessity of keeping the big car on the road. However, their turn at the back seat came after half of the twenty-five miles had been traveled, and Fred turned chauffeur.

Upon their arrival at the inn they all admitted Jim had picked "some place." The crowd was in great fettle. And it was a wild gang with all elements of society grandly mixed. It looked as if the nice people had come to view the other kind, and that the other kind had come for a similar purpose. Peggy was hardly in the door, hanging upon Jim's arm, when she heard her name called. She turned and saw the Richardsons of Sleepy Hollow with a hilarious party. Nothing would do but Peggy and her friends join the Richardson's. Later Mrs. Richardson insisted that they must all spend the night and Sunday at her place nearby——

"Haven't got a stitch to wear tomorrow—imagine an even—" commenced Peggy when a young man she had just met cut in:

"Don't fret about that—we'll outfit you all in some of our spare knickers," whereupon all agreed and laughed. Peggy and Florrie telephoned home, of course—they wished they didn't have to bother about such things. But, then, that was one of the few little things that kept them nice.

The party left the inn about four o'clock with all of the original couples disorganized, but blissfully happy in strange company and enjoying the sensation of being made love to at dawn. Of course they all got up for lunch and lolled around. Then about four some more folks came in for tea. Mrs. Richardson introduced all her friends as being such lovely, nice people. And, indeed they were nice people in every sense of the word. Of course she did not say that they were also naughty people.

Now suppose for a moment that the party these young folks pulled off last Saturday night and Sunday had occurred five or six years ago. Be honest with yourself. Wouldn't the boys have felt that they were with a mighty fast pair of girls?—girls who were fine enough to play around with on the sly, but not the kind to marry, or introduce to one's sister? And, suppose the NICE girls of those days had heard of the party—Oh, boy! wouldn't Florrie and Peggy have been blue-lawed, outcast and ostracized.

Today Peggy and Florrie and thousands of others just like them can get away with their alleged naughtiness because ideas and standards have changed. It does not necessarily make it right because they can get away with such parties. However, they do, and whatever you can get away with today belongs to YOU. That seems to be the game.

(*Continued on page* 29)

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Charged With His Own Murder

A Mystery Novel by Fulton Oursler

What has happened so far--

ANN was Archie's boyhood sweetheart. They had been brought up together. As children they were playing one day on the edge of a steep cliff. Accidentally Archie pushed Ann over and her hip was shattered. She became an invalid for life—but Archie loved her and would have married her except that when Ann found it was due to Archie's bounty that she was taking a course in Bryn Mawr, she suddenly went down into the East Side to do settlement work, where she became lost to him.

In the meantime Archie's fortunes grew apace, and without loving her, he became engaged to Miriam Blanton, daughter of Hiram Blanton, the piano king.

Seeking a way out of his engagement with Miriam, knowing that he loved Ann, Archie accidentally ran across the fact that every third member of his family as far back as the geneological records went, was insane. He was next in line.

Just as he was about to go to Miriam to tell her the sad facts, a messenger brought a note from someone on the East Side who said that Ann was innocently involved in a conspiracy to get Archie's fortune and to contract marriage with a villain.

Before Archie could reach the messenger, the man was gone, so he determined to wait until after he had called on Miriam and broken his engagement, to locate Ann and to save her from the clutches of the conspirators.

He enters Hiram Blanton's home and announces to the piano manufacturer that he cannot marry Miriam, and is promptly thrown out of the house. He cannot understand this treatment, nor does he understand it until he reaches home and, looking in a mirror, he discovers that he has an absolutely changed personality—that where he wore a short beard, the beard was gone. That his eyes, his hair, were a different color—in fact, that he bore no resemblance whatever to the Archie Middleton who started out a few hours before.

Brooding on this discovery, he is confronted by Bunch, his butler, with a revolver, who orders him to put his hands up, and even his aunt, Mrs. Lansing, who appears in the room, does not know him.

Detectives are sent for and no one will believe that he i s Archie Middleton, especially after the murdered body of Archie Middleton is discovered in the house and he, Archie himself is charged with his own murder!

He is immediately taken to the station house where, of course, no one believes him, and it is at this point that Ann, on the street with Clarence Burton, the villain she is about to marry, sees a newspaper headline reading: "Archie Middleton Murdered." It is then that she knows that she loves Archie, and she calls at the police station to see what she can do for "the crazy man" who is being held there and who claims that he is Archie Middleton.

Ann, while not believing the man who claims he is Middleton, nevertheless promises to remain unwed until the mystery is solved. It now appears that the whole plot has been engineered by Bunch, Archie's butler, and that Clarence is Bunch's son.

Bunch arranges for a crooked lawyer to handle Archie's case. Archie is taken to his own home in an endeavor to prove his identity. In the cellar he is confronted with—his own body!

THE soul, the spirit, the personality, the identity, the ego, the conscious individuality of Archie Middleton stood stupefied, appalled and dazed.

The body of Archie Middleton lay dead on the floor.

To the last tick of eternity the memory of that ghastly revelation will be as clear to him as the greenish shine of the revealing moon.

Every detail will be remembered until the end of remembrance. The darkened library with the pool of moonlight drenching the still form, the hoarse breathing of astonished men, the gasping, incoherent utterances of stricken women, the upturned, stark dead face with the blood clot on the beard, the fretting of the desk clock, the far away slam of a door all was etched into the very substance of his soul, never to be erased.

There it sprawled, that incredible, unbelievable thing, his own corpse. On the little finger of its left hand gleamed his mother's wedding ring and a twitch of his own smile was on its lips triumphant even in its last grim convulsion. Behind the half-closed eyelids it seemed to conceal a glitter of amusement as if the dead body had played a ghastly jest upon its master.

Moist ice was on Archie's forehead and a clammy sweat itched his palms; all his body felt frozen. For a century it seemed that he hovered over the prostrate form. Yet it could have been only a minute or two. Anne's cry aroused him.

It was a short wounded cry half-choked and poignant. One terrible look she gave Archie, one look of such utter condemnation that it blasted his heart and then she fell weeping into the arms of Mrs. Lansing.

Archie looked around him; saw the sodden faces of Bunch and the two policemen, saw the quivering lips of his aunt as she clasped Anne tightly and then another horror reared in his mind. The man who had been hovering beside Anne when she first came in slid cautiously into the moonlight.

In one wild moment Archie knew him.

It was the chauffeur of the taxi in which he had ridden from his home to the Blantons.

This sanctimonious injured young man—he could not mistake him. What was he doing here? Why should he follow Anne? Curiously the questions pounded through Archie's distracted brain as he saw the creature draw nearer to the sobbing girl.

It was in Archie's heart then to fling himself forward and choke the truth from him, to demand from him his business there with Anne.

But as the motive surged in him he realized that Hicks stood at one side and Slover at the other and they grabbed him and held him fast.

In dumb silence he watched Bunch go to Mrs. Lansing's assistance as she helped Anne gently from the room. The sanctimonious man followed and left the policemen alone with their captive.

"Slover," said Hicks quietly, "I can manage this bird! Go down and telephone the office and ask for orders. Switch on the lights as you go out."

Slover did as he was told, shutting the door behind him.

Then the volcano in Archie blew up.

With a terrific twist he wrenched his arm free from Hicks' grasp. His right arm swung out and his fist landed a stinging whack on the policeman's jaw. As Hicks staggered back dazed and astonished, Archie jumped across the dead form on the floor and turned the lock on the door.

The next instant he had switched off the lights. He and Hicks were locked in the library together and could fight it out alone in the dark.

For a moment he stood perfectly still. He could hear the labored breathing of Hicks and as his eyes became accustomed to the gloom, he could dimly discern the policeman's bulking figure near the fireplace. This was all Archie asked.

Chuckling with fierce exultation that at last he could fight for himself on something like even terms, Archie flung himself forward straight as a foot-ball player heading for a goal. He collided against Hicks with terrific force and they both crashed to the floor overturning a marble lamp and shattering it. Hicks groaned from the shock, but he was strong and furious. With berserk rage he ripped and tore with his arms, wriggling and squirming and forcing himself upward with gorilla strength while Archie battled to keep him down.

With a mighty effort Hicks managed to throw him to one side and then, twisting and squirming, hitting and hammering, they rolled across the rug, upsetting chairs and crashing against the wall. There they dead-locked, Archie trying to free his arms, which Hicks now held in a grasp of iron, afraid to let go.

"Help!" yelled the policeman, his voice pealing forth like a roar of thunder. "Slover! Anybody! Help!"

A woman's scream followed and the sound of many feet running in the halls and presently the rattling of the knob and a clambering at the door Slover was shouting to be let in.

They were sweating now at the tension, Archie bracing himself to break the hold of those steel encircled arms, Hicks exerting every ounce of power

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left in him to hold on until the key was found or the library door was battered down.

But the tiger was awake within Archie. Horror piled upon horror had gone too far; if there were madness in him, he was wild at last. He relaxed a moment and then, with one tremendous tug of his muscles, wrenched himself free.

Before Hicks could stop him, before his pounding arms could force him back, Archie had him by the cheeks, had caught his flesh between fingers of steel and regardless of blow after blow on his own neck and shoulders, he shook Hicks up and down again and again harder and harder, furiously and with greater ferocity, flogging his head against the floor until the echoes sounded like the beating of a drum, until the man's resisting arms weakened and palsied and dropped limp, until Hicks lay quiet and harmless.

He went out not a minute too soon.

A key rattled in the lock and now the library door swung crashingly inward and Slover rushed in, followed by Bunch and Clarence.

As Slover glanced hurriedly around, Archie stood quickly erect, grasped a priceless marble vase and hurled it through the air straight at the policeman's head.

It missed, smashing the glass door of a book-case into a thousand tinkling fragments. With a shrill cry of anger Slover made for him. Archie was ready, but he was not prepared for the enraged onslaught that he received.

With both fists raining short blows, Slover butted in like an engine of destruction and landed two cruel rib punches which Archie returned with a short sledge hammer bolt against the jaw, at the same time tripping the detective's heels and shoving him clawing and straddling across a chair.

Like a battering ram, Archie plunged after him just in time to behold Bunch lifting a heavy andiron from the fire-place and creeping toward him.

Slover sprang gamely to his feet and again with clenched pounding fists in vicious short jabs rushed on him. With a steady pull, Archie swung his antagonist around so that he could watch Bunch while he fought.

This man Slover was a fighter. In every moment of those fierce three minutes they tumbled and tussled, gripped and clenched, fell and rolled and rose, parted and joined, squirmed and dodged, twisted and struck—and then—

Archie pushed all his strength into one cannon-ball upthrust of his fist implanted against Slover's neck just below the jaw. With a groan the detective sank down in a heap knocked out. As he looked up Archie saw the descending shadow of something black over his head. It was Bunch bringing down the andiron to crush his skull.

Forward leaped Archie, seizing the fat man's arm with one hand while he lifted the other to disarm him—when a new element entered into the fight. A few feet away stood the sanctimonious man pointing a revolver at Archie.

"Let go my father," quavered Clarence, "or I'll shoot."

For reply Archie seized Bunch and whirled him around in a wild scuffling half circle. Then sending him spinning and crashing across the floor against the younger man and knocking them both in a heap. In falling, Bunch's bald head cracked against the leg of an overturned table and he went peacefully and unprotestingly to sleep.

Only wild-eyed, terrified Clarence remained. His pistol had fallen harmlessly in a nearby corner. Heaving and panting, but grinning with victory, Archie strode over to the door and locked it again. Then he faced Clarence.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"I'm Clarence Borden. I'm the gentleman that is going to marry Anne Winter," responded Clarence dazedly.

Archie stood debating whether he should kill him at once, but prudence intervened. A thousand theories were buzzing in his head now. His eyes were beginning to open, but liberty was calling, liberty and the chance to work out the whole problem unmolested. He would not waste time now.

Without a word he rushed at Clarence and lifted him like a girl. Without a word Clarence submitted. He was used to being picked on. Archie carried him across the room and into the opening where the body that had seemed his own had been found, he thrust his rival. Not until he was completely in the compartment did Clarence begin to howl, but by that time Archie was pressing the lower lever and the door was swinging back into its hiding place.

The one conscious witness of the escape, he had suddenly decided to attempt, was locked up and harmless for a little while. The two policemen and Bunch had not so much as stirred, but Archie knew that any moment they might leap back into the struggle. He waited for no more.

Quickly he rushed to the window. A few tempting feet from the sill shivered the bare branch of an old elm as it stood in the yard below for centuries. Twice as a boy Archie had startled and frightened Anne by leaping from the window and clutching safely at the branch and then swinging hand over hand until he got to the trunk and scrambled down. He was going to try it now.

Out on the dizzy ledge he clambered, braced himself for a moment and let go.

A moment's wild rush through space and his clutching hands caught the bough. It didn't crack beneath the sudden impact of his weight but dropped far down dangerously and Archie dangled too high to jump down, too low it seemed to climb back. But this last he set himself resolutely to do.

Hand over hand he pulled aching and weakening, but courageous and determined. A great pain gathered in his head as he tugged and reached and pulled himself up and over again and yet again until he had come at last to the trunk and circled it with his sagging arms. Swiftly, dizzily he slid to the ground.

One hurried glance upward he shot at the window. No face was there. All around him was the darkness in the garden, but he knew every foot of it. In another moment he had traversed the entire length of the black and deserted yard. He clambered over the rear wall and getting down the alley, he merged into Park Avenue.

Swiftly he rushed on without looking back mentally thanking his guiding providence that he still wore the coat and hat in which he had been arrested. He came to Seventieth Street and as he turned the corner he looked back. No one was following him. On he hurried until he came to the avenue.

As he reached the corner a green bus lumbered to the curb. Without hesitation he clambered on board, climbed to the roof deck and sat down. Then he looked back down the beautifully lighted avenue. He saw no one rushing, no one shouting, no police whistle was blown.

For the present he was free. He was a hunted man charged with his own murder, but he was still to be caught.

ARCHIE remembered right away that he didn't have ten cents in his jeans. He was up against his first problem in retaining his freedom.

But when the conductor asked him for his fare Archie told him he just discovered that he had lost all his money and the conductor not only agreed to lend him the ten cents, but also lent him a pencil to write down his name and address so that he could later reimburse him and then lent him an additional dime for good luck.

Archie made up his mind that if he ever got back to normalcy again and could spend some of his own money, he would send that bus conductor a check he would never forget.

While the bus rumbled northward, he undertook a consideration of his immediate plans. He was in an exceedingly precarious position and he knew he must work fast. In the entire seclusion of the windy upper deck, he sought to find the right thing to do.

He was a fugitive from justice. He was wanted for his own murder.

These were big facts, but Archie was thinking of one still bigger.

Anne Winter was going to marry that little criminal he had locked up in his wine cellar. Certainly the old man who had come to Archie's home the night before the cataclysm and left him an anonymous note had known what he was talking about.

Suddenly Archie remembered Professor Virgil McLoud, the mysterious old gentleman who had visited him in his cell. Certainly he must have been the writer of that mysterious note. What was the singular interest of Professor Virgil McLoud in all this strange business? Here was something to be pondered on.

The Professor had told him he could always be found at Gramercy Park at this very hour. Instantly Archie decided to seek him there.

But Archie's thoughts inevitably reverted to Anne. Anne had listened to him, had been in part at least convinced of some singular mix-up in identity until half an hour ago. In the cell she had promised him never to marry until she knew what had happened to Archie. By some damnable magic she had actually seen Archie's corpse. She knew now, or thought she knew, that Archie was dead.

All that Archie cared for was time enough, liberty enough to block the dastardly game he felt was being played against him. Some of its implications were becoming clearer.

At Riverside Drive and Cathedral Parkway he left the bus and waited for another that pursued a southern route down the Drive. This carried him past the brooding North River with its ship lights flashing like brandished flambeaux on the waters under the ardent benediction of the moon.

At Seventy-second Street it turned and continued to Broadway, thence down to Fifty-seventh Street and across to Fifth Avenue. By taking a bus which took this circuitous route he avoided re-passing the danger zone from which he had recently escaped. Now that he had shaken off immediate pursuit he felt reasonably safe, for he was but one man in six million, a needle lost in the great Manhattan haystack.

The bus finally landed him at Eighteenth Street, where he crossed to Gramercy Park.

To his delighted amazement he saw approaching him down the side of the barricaded little park, Professor Virgil McLoud. The professor saw him at the same moment.

"Holy Sheva!" ejaculated the Professor boomingly. "How—Oh, my—What—Why——"

"Never mind," cautioned Archie nervously. "Come over here to a bench where we won't attract attention. I have got to get your help."

The professor, strangely silent and darting odd bird-like glances at his companion agreed and they passed down a short walk under some muttering trees and into a corner of comparative seclusion. The man stretched forth his great neck and lowered his head in an ostrich-like gesture of profound expectency.

"In God's name, my dear Middleton, what has transpired?" he croaked.

Archie was about to reply when a bulking form crossed the path and a thick-necked, heavy-jawed man strode up to them authoritatively.

"You're the bird I want!" he said, seizing Archie by the arm and pulling him to his feet. "You've been acting damn queer! You're the guy that they sent out a general alarm for from headquarters an hour ago! You're the guy that croaked Middleton!" His hand tightened in a deadly grip on Archie's arm.

At the same time Professor Virgil McLoud stepped a little to one side apprehensively. He glanced around noting the deserted emptiness of the park. The old man seemed to undergo a convulsion. He wriggled and contorted as if under the influence of struggling and conflicting emotions. Finally one of them triumphed.

He raised his green umbrella and brought down its thick-nobbed handle with a brutal crack on the detective's head. The latter gave a hoarse and astonished groan and fell senseless in a heap.

"Come on!" the old man cried, seizing Archie's arm. "We've got to hurry!"

BY eight o'clock on that evening an outward calm settled over the Middleton household.

The wild scramble after the escaped prisoner was over.

Headquarters knew the story, the general alarm was sounded, extras were on the street with front-page accounts and photographs of the murdered young man. The disgraced Hicks and Slover were gone to make their peace with the outraged Lieuten-

(*Continued on page* 30)

"I hereby sell my soul to the Devil" ..... That's the note on which "Sold to the Devil" new Midnight serial is based — next week —

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The Life Story of Veronica

Queen of New York's Moulin Rouge

GRAHAM was a shrewd man. To hear him talk to those girls anyone would have believed him as benevolent as a Baptist deacon. To hear him talk, you would think that butter would not melt in his mouth. He adopted a paternal attitude toward the girls in the company and toward Miss Thorne, our leader, his manner was most kind and most respectful.

As a result of these maneuvers, Graham became very popular with them all and when we landed at Nantes, he helped us with our baggage and travelled with us to Paris.

All this time he paid very little attention to me, so the situation was not embarrassing, although now and then I could feel his piggy eyes devouring my face and form when he thought no one was looking. I didn't worry much about it. My feelings were deeply stirred! I was in France. No longer did a green and broad Atlantic roll and heave between my wounded lover and myself. Every rattling jolt of the funny old train, which was snorting with us toward Paris, was bringing me closer to his bedside. That was the big thing to me. Beside it nothing else mattered. I could even force a smile at one of Graham's lame and clumsy jokes.

When we reached the beautiful city of Paris—which is not so beautiful when you look at it from the railroad station after the run from Nantes—I was for calling up all the hospitals to find Eddie before I did anything else, but my friend Miss Thorne gently showed me the uselessness of that. To find Eddie might take several days of careful inquiry and as I didn't speak French, it would be impossible for me to conduct the search alone. I saw the wisdom of this and resigned myself to do what Miss Thorne thought best.

But I didn't feel any too happy when I saw that she was depending very largely on Graham for advice.

Graham was a Parisian old timer and volunteered to secure us quarters where we could all be together. At this, Miss Thorne was delighted. She regarded Graham as a reputable American business man and was pleased to be able to rely on him, for the responsibility of chaperoning us girls half around the world—sometimes we weighed heavily on her mind.

GRAHAM found us a lodging house on one of the nice streets where we each had a separate room, and where first-class meals were promised at a figure which Miss Thorne regarded as very reasonable. We were all very tired and yet I couldn't sleep that night for thinking about how close I was to Eddie.

But as it turned out, there was a method in all this attention on the part of Graham. He had an

object, and the object was a distressed little cabaret girl who had crossed the ocean in search of her wounded lover.

I think he had no tangible plan in mind in the beginning, but it did not take long for him to form one. He meant to take advantage of conditions as they did actually exist in Paris at that time. Every ordinary barrier of restraint had long since broken down. France was never supposed to be a particularly goody-goody place, especially in Paris, but when the war came, nearly all the conventions were brushed aside. Some people may deny this, but it is the truth. At the time I arrived in Paris, this situation was at its height, and Graham knew it.

He figured that he would tame me, and be able to get away with it without interference.

I think I had somehow got on Graham's nerves. He was so accustomed to getting everything that he wanted, and was so sure that his money would buy him anything he desired, that my continual refusal was to him a challenge which his pugnacity and his perseverance could not ignore.

The first day that we spent in Paris, after our arrival, I had the assistance of Miss Thorne, when she was not otherwise engaged, in hunting for Eddie. But she could give me only a part of her time, and in the few hours that we were able to inquire, we accomplished nothing.

That night Graham gained entrance to my bedroom.

I had not yet retired, but my waist and skirt were lying on the bed and my hair was down. I was standing before the old-fashioned mirror, when I heard the key turn in the door. I was not frightened until the door fell back silently and disclosed Graham, his face uglier than ever because of an evil smile of triumph.

I opened my mouth to scream, but he sprang upon me, crushing his big, moist, hateful palm against my mouth.

"Be quiet, you little fool," he whispered fiercely. "I've come here to help you, and you try to make a holler. Sit down there and listen to me!"

He half pushed me down on the bed, while he stood in front of me, regarding me with undisguised pleasure.

"What do you want with me?" I demanded.

"You'll learn, soon enough," he said. "I know why you came over here. You're looking for that smart acrobat, Eddie Fields. Well, I don't owe him anything very much, I guess, in the way of favors. If you had been friends with me, I could have saved you a lot of trouble. I knew what was what all along and you didn't, because having you in mind I made it my business to find out. On the day before you sailed for Europe, Eddie Fields was sent back to America!"

"It can't be true!" I cried, in agony.

"It is true, nevertheless," he snarled. "And what's more—understand this. You won't find it so easy to get back. You're in a bad fix. And also I happen to be a United States government agent here, and I can get you home, or keep you here, just as I choose, because I've got the influence to do it. And finally—if you don't get home to your acrobat pretty quick, it won't be no use going. He's dying by inches!"

"What are you after?" I cried chokingly, desperately.

"Simply this—if you want to get back to him, you've got to make it worth my while. All the time I have been trying to be friends with you,

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Here's what happened to Veronica before--

VERONICA, child of the east side, was born with a love for dancing, music and beautiful clothes. Her parents, solid and respectable folk, tried to crush this spirit in her, but only made her more rebellious. Unknown to them she learned to dance marvelously well. When she was fourteen and a half years old she eloped with a man she had met in an office where she was employed and was married. While the police of the United States were looking for her she was spending her honeymoon in an Albany hotel. On her return to New York she accidently discovered that her "husband" was a married man with a child. She returned to her parents, but a little later on answered an advertisement for a girl who could dance. She secured a trial with a man who was staging a wire walking act for vaudeville and speedily learned to become an expert tight rope walker. One of the other girls, Ruby Winter, had a friend, a wealthy man who spent a great deal of time in the rehearsal rooms and who became attracted to Veronica. Meanwhile, Veronica's eyes had lingered on a handsome young aerialist for too bashful to return her gaze. One day while she was waiting in a retired corner of the rehearsal rooms, Graham, the wealthy friend of Ruby, tried to kiss her, and in the struggle that followed, Eddie Fields, the young acrobat, came to Veronica's assistance by smashing Graham in the jaw. Graham fell, striking his head against a piano leg and Ruby rushing up to him cried, "You have killed him." However, Graham was only stunned and departed threatening vengeance on Eddie Fields. Later Veronica is given the stellar position in the act, displacing Ruby, who in a fit of jealous rage tries to throw her off the high wire. A daring swing by Eddie Fields rescues Veronica just in the nick of time. Ruby is thereupon dismissed from the act, which so interrupts the program that the act is made over, and secures an engagement as a cabaret attraction on Broadway. Here Veronica for the first time learns the life of the cabaret girl. In the meantime Eddie Fields tells her that he loves her and they are planning to be married. Although realizing that she is not playing fair, Veronica finds it impossible to tell Eddie about her childhood marriage. Just on the eve of their wedding he receives proofs of this early affair from the hand of Ruby, who is still determined to have revenge. It is the night that the United States declares war on Germany. Veronica receives Eddie's farewell note just before she is to begin her tight wire performance. Heartbroken at Eddie's decision to go overseas with a detachment of Canadian troops, she rushes out into the cabaret and clambers onto the wire. There she is overcome. She finds it impossible to regain her balance, and in falling, Veronica is badly hurt, and for two weeks lingers unconscious in a hospital. Just as she is convalescing she receives word from vindictive Ruby that Eddie Fields has been seriously wounded on the field of battle and is believed to be dying in a Parisian hospital. Through the sympathetic assistance of Big John Nestor she secures an engagement with a famous American actress who is taking a crowd of entertainers abroad. On the ship she finds her old enemy Graham, who makes renewed overtures to her. He finally reaches her room in a Parisian lodging house and tells her that Eddie Fields has been sent back to America and that as passenger lists are closed, it will be impossible for her to get back to the United States without his influence. This influence he will not lend unless she consents to his advances.

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you've been giving me the cold shoulder. Now the tables are turned. Are you ready to listen to me?"

AS I looked at Graham, and realized the inexorable purpose in his bloodshot eyes, my heart was filled with despair.

What could I do? What could any girl do? I knew that Miss Thorne and the rest of the girls were out sightseeing. Having no thought but for Eddie, and no taste for pleasure, I had decided to stay at home and thus played into the hands of Graham. With the exception of the deaf old *concierge*, he and I were alone in this house.

To all intents and purposes, he had me at his mercy at last. Yet in the twinkling of an eye, my despair gave way to the courage that comes to us all, I suppose, when everything seems lost. A wild plan occurred to me; a scheme from which I instinctively shrank, and yet, as we stood there confronting each other in silence, it seemed to grow more feasible with every second.

I would outwit Graham! I would trick him and get away!

I knew that my cheeks were blanched and that my partly clad body was trembling, but I forced myself to smile at him, to look alluringly at him, with my old practiced smile of the cabaret.

"You big strong man, you!" I gasped. "Somehow it seems I have been waiting for you! Somehow it seems that whenever I have pushed you away from me I always wanted you to come back. Some day I knew you would master me. I cannot resist you any longer."

He broke into a throaty growl of delighted laughter.

"I knew I'd get you, you little devil!" he chortled, and taking a long stride forward, he tried to seize my bare arms in his enormous red and hairy hands. I dodged him quickly, darting behind a chair and throwing a kimono around my shoulders.

"What's the matter?" he demanded pugnaciously.

"Just a moment," I said, lifting a coy finger and smiling my prettiest. "You came here to propose a bargain, but it is not yet closed."

"How do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean I want to get back to America. You say that you have the influence to do it. Before I will let you touch me you have got to write me an order on one of your business cards to someone in authority here in Paris, so that I can secure immediate return passage." He grinned wisely.

"You are pretty smart, you are!" he commented. "But where do I get off at? How do I know that after I give you what you want, that you won't tell me to go to hell?"

For a moment I was balked. Then, like an inspiration, an audacious idea came into my mind. Again I smiled at him.

"We are alone in this house to all intents and purposes. If I scream no one can hear me. There is a key in the door. Lock it! Put the key in your pocket. Then write me that order and we will have no more quarrelling."

A look of relief crossed Graham's face. Plainly he was now convinced that I had completely surrendered. He hesitated only a moment, then, crossing the room, he sat down at a small desk and on a white engraved card he wrote a few sentences. Having blotted this, he put on his glasses—I discovered then that he was exceedingly near-sighted—and read the following aloud:

"Dear General ———: Miss Veronica Marquise, whom this card will introduce, must return to the United States immediately on government enterprises. Please see that she gets immediate sailing. A. H. Graham."

"How is that?" he demanded. "Is that what you want? I couldn't make it any stronger than that and I swear to you this will get you the accomodations that you want."

He stole over toward me and let me read it, written in his elegant flowing script, an indication, I suppose, of the vanity of his character.

"I shall have to take your word for it," I said, and moved away from the door which I had been guarding while he wrote.

He sprang for it instantly, chuckling to himself, and hurriedly turned the key in the lock. Then he withdrew it and tucked it away carefully in his right-hand trouser pocket. Slapping his thigh, he turned and faced me across the room.

I was standing at the window looking down into the courtyard four stories below. It seemed to me that to be crushed to death against those flagstones would be better than to yield to a single embrace from such a man as Graham. But what of Eddie? If it were not for Eddie, I would willingly have plunged headlong out that window and escaped. But I wanted to see my lover before he died.

"Veronica," said Graham, huskily. "I always get what I go after. I told you that once before, and I told you that I was the original kid who laughed last! And here you are!"

"Yes," I echoed dully, "here you are!"

He folded his arms as if posing for a figure of Victory. Then suddenly a strange light came into his eyes and his face flushed. He leaned forward pounding one fist into his palm.

"Understand this," he grated, "I liked you before I ever had a quarrel with you. I still like you, Veronica. Come here to me! I want to kiss you!"

"Look!" I cried suddenly. "Someone at the door!"

As he turned quickly, tricked by that old ruse which I have read of in a dozen novels, I slipped noisely out of the windows.

By the time Graham had turned again, the room was empty.

I could hear his gasp of utter bewilderment as I clung tenatiously to one little strip of projecting stone coping with my hands, as my feet rested on a brick ledge jutting out perhaps two inches from a wall that dropped sheer four floors to the street.

I had plotted this thing as I stood there toying with Graham. The card which he had given me was tucked under my garter. I was in a fluffy pink silk combination garment—my outer clothes being in the room—and thus I had all the freedom of an acrobatic costume.

The plan which I had conceived in my mind in that hour of torment and terror was utterly simple to a girl of my training. From the other end of the roof stretched a wire across the street, where it connected with another building.

I could cross that wire and be free!

That was the audacious idea which had come to me in the room. And now as Graham poked his head out the window and heaved a blasphemous oath of fright and amazement at what I was attempting, I felt sure that I could go on.

The Daughter of a Murderer a new 4 part serial story of love, mystery and adventure begins in the next issue of Midnight

The only obstacle in my path was my fear of the wire, which had come to me since the night I had fallen in the cabaret. Now I knew as I looked below me from that fearful height, that I had nothing to fear. Never before had I been more than eighteen feet from the ground. Now I was more than one hundred feet above the earth and there was darkness around me and my clutch and foothold against the wall were insecure and my arms were already tired. Yet I crept out farther and farther along that dizzy coping, until finally that wire came within the grasp of my hand.

I clung to it as I pulled myself up the side of the building and then cast around desperately for something with which to balance myself.

There was nothing in sight. I must flee out on that wire with only my sense of equilibrium and my fluttering arms to sustain me.

I could hear Graham calling to me. He dared not call too loud for fear of rousing the neighborhood, but huskily and fearfully he kept shouting:

"Come back, Veronica! For God's sake, come back, Veronica! I won't hurt you! Come back! Come back!"

With one hand holding the chimney, I put my foot upon the wire. I tested it with blows and kicks until I knew it would bear my weight. Then I steadied it, and with a little prayer that I could go across the dark chasm of the street safely so that I could reach Eddie's side securely, I took my first step forward.

High, high, high in the air—with the wire quivering and trembling under my feet. My old power to fly had come back to me. Something between a laugh and a sob came from my lips as I threw back my head and ran boldly, swiftly, wildly across that slender swaying wire four stories above the street—and safely reached the other side!

I didn't lose consciousness, but the nervous effort had exhausted me and I lay across there on the gabled roof of that old French house, cowering, trembling and suddenly become very cold.

Down in the courtyard, I could hear a clamor of voices. My exploit had been seen. The harrassed folk of the neighborhood, by this time accustomed to bombardments from the air and various enemy alarms, had beheld a new wonder against the sky—a girl in pink underwear, running across the telephone wire!

The tumult increased and I simply lay there dazed and wondering how I would ever get down. I could hear the creak of windows being raised all around me and then the astonished face of an old man, wearing a green nightcap with a dangling tassel, appeared almost beside me. I had been crouched beside a window and didn't know it.

He jabbered at me wildly in French, which of course I didn't understand, but when I extended my hand he seized it and drew me gently in. Is uppose that he was some harmless old bachelor who had a room in the lodging house and my entrance to his boudoir under such circumstances threw him almost into hysterics.

Before long the room was filled with all sorts of people; lodgers of the house, including the stout and puffy landlady, who took me in her arms and carried me to her own room. I think they imagined that I was either insane or walking in my sleep. Then the gendarmes came and finally an interpreter who demanded to know the reason for my extraordinary behavior.

I told them nothing except that I wanted to see Miss Thorne. I gave them the address of the house across the street and luckily for me, Miss Thorne had just returned with the other girls.

I shall never forget the expression of her face when she saw me. I wept in her motherly arms and sobbed out my story. When she finally got me back to the house and had placed me in her own bed, we discovered that Graham had disappeared.

He left Paris that night, but Miss Thorne, capable and determined woman that she was, saw that his story pursued him and his career as a government agent ended within a month. In fact, I believe that he returned to America and his own business enterprises within a few days of my own sailing.

I didn't find it necessary to use his card. Miss Thorne had other friends and she worked loyally to assist me. First she confirmed Graham's story that Eddie had been sent back to America. Then she secured passage for me. Three weeks later I again saw the Goddess of Liberty looming against the skyline of my own city—wonderful New York!

I brought letters of introduction to certain army officers, to whom I applied immediately. From them I learned that Eddie was in a hospital on Long Island. Without having eaten all day, I got into a taxicab and told the driver to take me there. Within

(*Continued on page* 30)

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How Andrew Carnegie Saved Me from a Thrashing

(*Continued from page* 11)

President of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association and I were left alone, the atmosphere was just a little strained. He glowered at me in ruffled silence for a few moments and then he said,

"Just remember that this day's work is going to get you fired!"

I thought it wiser not to answer and so we remained for perhaps ten minutes. Then the door opened again and out came Mr. Carnegie with his arm around the physician whom he led over to me and said:

"This is Dr. Brown. He has just made an examination of my wife. He says the hemorrhage which she suffered is not serious. He will give you all the details. I trust you will not make too much of a sensation of the story, but I do know that you have to get the news. I am glad to see how you stuck to your job. I admire your spunk—and if anybody tries to get you fired, please let me know and I will write your employer a letter. Good-bye, young man and God bless you. I hope you will make a brilliant success in your career."

Then he and the doctor helped Mrs. Carnegie down the stairs and into a waiting limousine which whirled them away. Not one glance did Andrew Carnegie bestow upon the President of the Merchants and Manufacturers Association.

I have often thought of the difference in men of little dignities and of true greatness.

As it happened I didn't get fired!

How Naughty Some Girls Can Be and Still Be Nice

(*Continued from page* 24)

The whole thing seems to be this. Our age is not a vulgar age. The vulgar state of things has passed. We no longer like the physical side of life as a cannibal likes raw meat. In our approach to what is suggestive, and very much a physical part of life, we show more fineness, more aplomb, as it were, in our naughtiness. In other words, ten years ago only bad girls were naughty; and they were naughty in an obviously rough and crude manner. Today a nice girl can be naughty to a certain extent because she lacquers the questionable things with the soft allurements of herself, and because she has upholstered the naughty things with a grace that is attractive in itself. Although it may be fundamentally wrong for a girl to go as far as she dares with a man—in plain English, approach the inevitably damning moral deadline for women and almost step across it—still such a daring approach seems to be accepted.

I do not mean to say by any means that one-half, or even one-third, of the modern girls go as far towards the naughty deadline as Peggy and Florrie did on the party described. But, I do believe that if one-half, or third of the girls cared to go that far they could do so, and still feel reasonably certain of being classed as NICE girls, at least in large cities and among the so-called wealthy class.

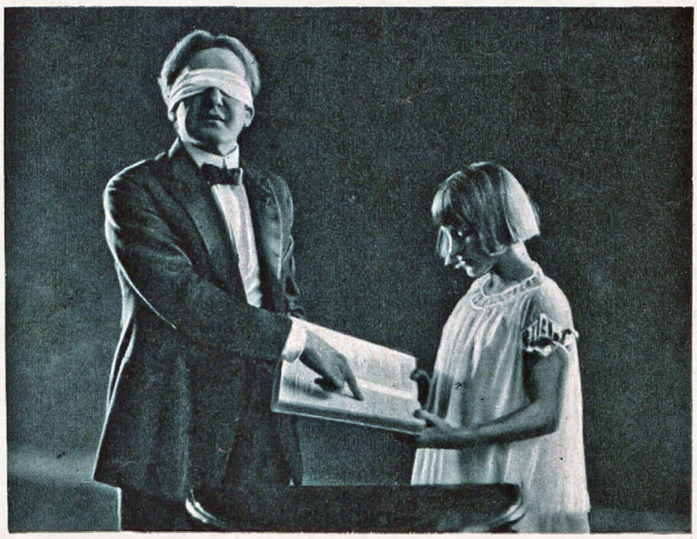
There are among the so-called certain classes of people, and of girls, who will differ very strongly from me in this belief. They will shout back at me that no girl who rolls her stockings and exposes her bare knees to the gaze of the male is a nice girl. They will damn her as a FAST girl. And so will they DAMN the girl who wears a man's one-piece bathing suit; who drinks cocktails, swaps risque stories and jokes, reads suppressed novels, allows men to kiss and hug her, and swears now and then.

I find my strongest and most convincing argument against the people who oppose my belief in the fact that the young men of the country are marrying the interesting, if daring lassies whom they call NICE girls in spite of their apparent NAUGHTINESS. That is, I think, the final analysis—the acid test—of whether a girl is NICE or NOT NICE. If you will remember a few years back, you will readily recall the fact that the prospective young husband demanded plenty of daylight between his future wife and the moral deadline for women. Today they still demand (men will most likely always make such a demand) that she be a NICE girl in the final sense. But they are not as much concerned with that streak of light between their girls and the fateful line.

The time when a NICE girl could not be a NAUGHTY girl has faded into oblivion like the old family album of tin types. As paradoxical as

Your Greatest Mystery Solved

Howard Thurston will answer questions asked by "Midnight's" readers on all phases of spiritism, occultism, etc. He also defines one mystifying trick each week. Questions will be answered in these columns.



The Famous Spirit Dictionary Illusion

PERHAPS the most baffling impromptu deception ever invented.

The magician is visiting at the home of a friend. He selects a book from the shelf, and asks someone to hold it. He now asks someone to call out three numbers, starting with the larger number first.

Let us suppose they are	742
"Reverse them," says the conjurer	247
"And subtract!"	495
"Reverse again!"	594
"And add!"	1089

The magician now explains that he would like the person holding the book to please look at the tenth word on the eighty-ninth page—the figures being drawn from the result of the foregoing calculation. But before the person can find the word, the magician has written it down—and also tells the words on either side of it.

This is another example of the simplicity of the best magic. Here the secret lies in the fact that the result of the calculation shown above is *always* **1089**. So all the performer has to do is steal a glimpse of the tenth word on the eighty-ninth page of a book, casually, and then, an hour later, spring the trick. Just try the above combination with any set of figures you please—the result never varies.

I AM gratified at the number of readers who want me to help them solve their mysteries, but one letter from a young man on the Coast has aroused my curiosity.

He says, in effect, "What benefit would there be in my learning sleight of hand tricks or parlor magic?"

Now, of course, I would have to write a book to tell this enquirer what he should know. I doubt if there is any form of entertainment that has so great a hold on the average person as feats of magic or legerdemain.

I have performed before hundreds of thousands of people, young and old—in every part of the United States.

Never in all the years that I have been on the stage have I seen an indication that interest in magic is waning.

In fact today, more than ever before, people want to be amused, entertained and instructed by illusions. Audiences are larger and more enthusiastic today than ever.

The young man or woman who can perform a few simple tricks is always in great demand at parties and social gatherings generally. This alone, combined with the pleasing effect such studies have on one's personality, offer the student of magic a pastime unequaled by any other form of entertainment.

I have answered hundreds of letters in the past few years, and I feel that whatever I have been able to do toward developing an interest in this, the most fascinating of all arts, has been well worth while.

Continue to let me hear from you.

HOWARD THURSTON,
The Mystery Editor.

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it may sound (and with all apologies to his nibs, Mr. Chesterton who manufactures and patents paradoxes by the bushel), I solemnly and sincerely declare that a NICE girl can be naughty and that a NAUGHTY darling can also be nice.

How I Got Away With It

(*Continued from page 5*)

we mix it hot an' heavy. He lands a pile-driver on me nose an' breaks it. A cop comes and nabs us.

In court Weaver, de bum, trying' ter alibi fer hittin' a girl tells de story of me onct bein' his gang boss and de beans are spilled all over again. Well—Weaver gits his and I'm sent ter me grandpop, and de court makes him take me ter a string o' fool doctors ter see if I'm fulla wheels in me attic.

I aint no nut, an' never was one. De docs soon figgered it out. I'm a woman—and not no queer somebody—I got sect-feelin's an' everything. So, I'm livin' like a girl now—in a damned ol' skirt and shirtwaist.

Will I ever git married?

Ha—Don't make me laf too much. Seems kinda bugs ter think o' meself tyin' up wid a feller after makin' love ter so many janes an' almost havin' ter marry one. But—mebbe—if a swell feller like ol' Iron-fisted Harry comes along and handed me taffy I guess I'd be a fool like all de rest and swaller it.

Mebbe you think I've done a lot o' wind jammin' 'bout meself in tellin' me life story as a boy gangster. I us'ally backs up anything I says an' I can back up all this story anyway yer like it. But, just ter be straight goods wid yer I'll now tell yer one time I was yellow—none of de gang knew dis—If they had—GOOD-NIGHT!

It happens durin' de war. Most of me gang wants ter git in de battlin'. Some goes in fer de Navy—some fer de Army. I eases down ter de Navy recruitin' place one day an' asks 'em ter take me on. I gives 'em me name and all de dope I dare. De feller looks at me eyes—me teeth—an' pulls a lota funny stunts wid me.

"Strip off yer clothes and git on dat scale," he says.

In a flash I figgers it can't be done. I'm too scared ter take a chance—I turns round and runs outa dat place a mile er minnit. When I sees de gang I says "doc turned me down fer flat feet." I hops a train an' lands in Brooklyn where I gits a job in a munitions joint runnin' a steam crane. That's how I fought de war.

Well, its all over but de shoutin' and razzin' now. I feel like a fish in skirts—an' people what knows me all look at me like I'm a side-show when I float down de street. I've given me word ter be a perfect lady. I'm gonna git a real job—an' see what happens——

In any case I already got an eyefulla what life is on both sides o' de sect line. An' I didn't git it peepin' thru no keyhole. I've got lotsa dope 'bout girls an' lots 'bout fellers. I know dat de fellers is got everything comin' their way all de time and us janes is outa luck less we change.

Here's something else I got wise ter. A jane'll never know another jane like a feller will. Wimmen is soft-boiled eggs when fellers come 'round.

Like I said 'fore—it aint no percentage in bein' a jane. Fellers git de gravy bowl. If I'm ever born again I'm goin' ter set up a helluva kick ter be a feller—believe me.

Is Your Husband Married?

(*Continued from page 21*)

anything to say about it. They had been selected for each other by dispassionate elders who had their interests at heart, and they had not seen each other until the wedding day. Although most of the marriages in China were seemingly happy—at least relatively few men ever asserted their recognized right to take additional wives if they chose—the situation naturally got my goat. Think of having a wife wished on you, like your religion, or your name, or the length of your nose; think of not being free to select the partner who is to make you happy for life. Humbly I implored this patriarch to explain it if he could.

"Oh, that isn't very strange," he said. "I've seen even stranger marriage systems than that. But the strangest system I ever heard of was in a distant province known as the United States of America."

"There," he said, "they have a strict form of monogamy. But the young people, instead of having their partners selected for them, make the selections for themselves. It is, of course, recognized that future happiness for both depends very largely upon the good judgment used when the selection is made."

"I see nothing strange in that," I told him.

"*And it is insisted upon,*" he added, "*by all the traditions of America that both parties, when they make this selection, shall be in a state of mind which makes the use of any sort of judgment impossible.* Naturally, there is nothing to do thereafter but to lie. In order to keep his promises to a woman, an American has got to lie to her. It isn't what he *does*; it's what he *is* that he's got to cover up. If he is attracted by another woman, he feels guilty about it. So he tries in all honor to deceive everybody concerned, including himself, and then complains, I believe, at being misunderstood. In China we men have no such difficulty. We are what we are. Perhaps we ought to be ashamed of it, but we are not. If a Chinese wants another woman or two, and he can afford them, he gets them. Then he takes them home. Where do they generally take them in America?"

I happened to reflect that this man was very rich. Naturally I asked him how many wives he had. When he told me that he had only one, I complimented him on his morals.

"No," he said. "No one in China would think of me as moral. They simply look upon me as lucky."

The Girl Who Paid $15,000 For Me

(*Continued from page 22*)

t—I liked you—Then I saw your fraternity pin—my dad is a Deek himself—I know they are all regular fellows—so I decided to try you—to trust you."

"Carmen, you are some girl," replied Jack as he looked again into the depths of her dark eyes which for the moment purposely lost their baffling mystery and met his own like an open book.

"Come on, Jack," she cried, taking his hand, "Dad'll think we are fooling with those old paste jewels he just shoved into the wall—"

"Paste!?"

"Yes, paste. They are part of the imitation Czarina's set. Come on, I know you are starving," she said pulling him towards the door.

Flirting at Sixty Miles An Hour

(*Continued from page 18*)

job of mine? Knowing her delicate feelings, and her jealous temperament so well I felt too tender-hearted and too careful to confront her with the bald and bold facts.

I'm a devil on a Pullman train, but I'd be nothing more than a flivver in my own home town. There's no percentage sitting at a mahogany desk from nine-thirty until five-thirty, signing letters and all of that, when a fellow can be burning the wind toward Chicago, St. Louis or Atlanta on a sixty-mile-an-hour limited with a beautiful fairy princess who plays a wicked game of rummy while her eyes make daring promises.

Eh, what?

Now it's time for the wifely souls to roar like angered lionesses. Softly, brethren—under you breath, of course—but if you're with me it's time for you to cheer.

The Life Story of Veronica

(*Continued from page 28*)

five hours of landing in New York I was in the office of the hospital speaking to the superintendent about Eddie. He looked at me very gravely.

"Is your name Veronica?" he asked.

I nodded affirmatively. Something in his manner had suddenly made it impossible for me to speak.

"He has asked for you," said the superintendent. "He has uttered your name a thousand times. I am glad that you have come. It is an act of mercy."

Ten minutes later I stood beside one of a long row of white cots, on which men were lying in anguish and in pain. But my ears were listening for the breathing of the stricken youth beside me. My eyes saw only his pale and wasted face, and the deep hollow in his cheeks.

My Eddie opened his eyes and looked at me!

(*To be concluded*)

Charged With His Own Murder

(*Continued from page 26*)

ant Monohan. The body, too, had been viewed by the coroner and removed to the morgue. The wrecked library had been cleaned up. Clarence had been rescued from the hidden closet.

Mrs. Lansing was with Anne in the pink and gold boudoir. Bunch was alone with Clarence in the library. Every tremor of Bunch's cheeks indicated desperation.

"Why won't she see you?" he demanded for the seventh time as he glowered at Clarence.

"Too upset, too grief stricken," whimpered Clarence.

"A fine red-cursed mess you have made of it now, haven't you?" snarled his father. "Well, we've faddled long enough. It's got to stop! I don't care a damn about her being grief stricken! If we don't get this thing settled now, we're going to lose out! Anne Winter's got to marry you to-night before something worse happens to us!"

In determined wrath he clenched his fists as he strode up and down the room. Resolutely he kept his eyes away from his son. Now, if ever, he needed to think clearly and whenever he saw Clarence clear thinking was impossible.

Bunch's scheme apparently had been a boomerang. He had wanted to convince Anne that Archie was dead. So effectively had he accomplished it that now she was too overcome to go on with the wedding.

Bunch swore roundly that she should go through with it. The more he thought on it the more obstinate he became in that determination. But how was he going to make her do it?

He stopped short, placed his fat hands composedly over his stomach and twiddled his thumbs.

"We can do it!" he declared. "My brains can solve anything! I can make her marry you to-night! Come here, you red-cursed numb-skull!"

Clarence glided across the floor until he was standing immediately in front of his irate progenitor. The older man looked at him closely. Certainly he was an object to arouse compassion. Across his forehead there was a deep gash cut by the projecting moulding of a bookcase. They had been so busy he had not had time to dress it. It was a blood-stained, miserable countenance at which Bunch gazed, the most abjectly injured face in the world.

"Good!" exclaimed Bunch. "Now you do what I tell you to do and our troubles will be all over! You get out of here right away! Go down to Twenty-third Street and find old Ishmael Langrave and this is what you tell him to do."

Bunch leaned forward and whispered husky instructions. Clarence nodded appreciatively. The old man certainly had a great head on him. This new scheme was a wonder. Obediently he repeated the instructions at Bunch's command. As a fatherly benediction Bunch encircled his son's nose with a threatening fist and pushed him out of the library.

Having made sure that Clarence had actually departed, Bunch now made his way to the floor of Mrs. Lansing's boudoir. He sent in word that he must see Mrs. Lansing at once. When that grieving woman came to the door Bunch told her one of the most scintillating lies of his brilliant career in falsehood.

"Mrs. Lansing," he began solemnly, "does Miss Winter understand that Clarence Borden is dying?"

"The young man she was going to marry?" gasped Mrs. Lansing.

"The very same," said Bunch earnestly. "He was very badly hurt during the trouble below. His skull was quite damaged. Broken in like an egg shell. The doctor says he can't live an hour. While he was downstairs he was begging and pleading to see Miss Winter. He was that bad off he wanted her at his side when he died. I thought I ought to let you know m'am. They wanted to take him to the hospital, but he insisted upon going to some old doctor that he knew. So they carried him down there in an ambulance. He said if anyone could cure him that old man could. He's an old friend. But the boy can't live m'am. He simply can't live."

Mrs. Lansing looked at him, speechless with this latest shock, then quickly swept back into the room. Presently came Anne, white-faced, to the doorway.

"Oh, m'am," sympathized Bunch, "they took him away and now he's calling for you. He wants you to come to him. He's going out, m'am. They told me on the telephone he's calling and calling for you to hold his hand as he goes. The're waiting on the phone now, Miss Anne, what will I tell them?"

"Tell them," answered Anne quietly, "that I will come at once, of course."

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Bunch hurried away to a waiting telephone that didn't exist, he heard Mrs. Lansing call Anne a brave girl and advise her to take Bunch with her. Which was exactly what Bunch had known was going to happen.

CLARENCE wrapped on the bedroom door of the old man's dwelling in Little Armenia.

If Clarence had been as astute as his father he might have suspected something behind the long wait which intervened before he was admitted. If his ears had been as acute as his father's he might have heard subdued voices and then the furtive shutting of a door. But Clarence heard none of these.

He wrapped three times before Ishmael shuffled painfully across the floor and timidly opened the door a crack. When he had identified the caller he opened the door wider and admitted him.

"Good evening, Clarence," he said defferentially. "Come in and sit down. Have you had a message from your father and what has happened to you? Your face is cut and bruised."

"Oh, there was a fight up at the Middleton house," and he briefly described to the old man's intense interest all that had occurred.

"And now," he concluded, "father is determined that we must get married to-night. He says it's the only thing to do. He has told Anne that I'm down here dying from my injuries. I'm going to get under the covers of your bed there and make out that's so. When she comes here I'll tell her that I've still got our marriage license in my coat pocket, and I have, too. You're a magistrate and you can marry us. She'll think it's a death-bed marriage. She's such a sentimental little fool she'll do it and of course after that I'll get well."

"Oh yes, Oh yes, Oh yes," mewed Ishmael appreciatively. "Your father does think of things, doesn't he? Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes."

"Don't stand there and say 'oh yes'," cried Clarence irritably. "She'll be here soon. Get me in that bed and fix me up to look worse. She must think I really am dying."

The old man clapped his palsied hands in senile delight.

"Surely, Clarence, boy," he agreed. "Get off your shoes and your shirt and your socks and get in bed. I'll make you look like a dying man—or like you're dying, anyhow."

Clarence had already got busy. His garments were being hurled to the four walls and presently he was snugly under the quilts, having assumed a terrifically injured expression.

It was a masterpiece of realism.

"Do I look all right?" he peeped.

"Not yet," answered the professor with a critical twist of his head and went off to a closet. He almost hid himself in the closet and if Clarence had been a bit more observing he might have discerned something mysterious in the professor's preoccupation there. But Clarence was busy making some preparatory experiments in moans, groans and other deep-throated symptoms of agony. Wailing and yawping and earnestly rehearsing the part he was to play. But he stopped when Ishmael stood before him with an armful of bandages.

"You have got to be bandaged to look like a badly hurt man," explained Ishmael and set to work. He swathed Clarence's head, his shoulders, his arms, his legs, until he looked like a war cripple. Out of that lace of bandages Clarence appeared, his injured expression more appealing than ever in its chaplet of gauze. Even Ishmael felt a twinge of pity when he looked him over.

Hardly had he finished when the distant sound of footsteps below warned them that Anne was coming. Ishmael, with an eye to the dramatic, turned down the wick of the oil lamp so that three-fourths of the room lay in deep shadow and then with the craft of Belasco he managed to focus the rays of the light directly on the face of his patient. It produced a blanched and truly dying expression. When the door opened the picture was complete.

Anne, her calm and serene face lighted with pity, limped across the floor and stood silently by the bedside. Clarence looked up at her mournfully.

"Anne," he groaned, "you've come to me at last." She bent over him and her cool hand touched his cheek.

"I'm dying, Anne," he gasped, writhing as if stung by a spasm of pain.

"Does the doctor say that?" she asked sadly.

"No hope, no hope, oh yes, no hope," crowed Ishmael.

The eyes of the patient opened with their injured expression.

"In my pocket—is our marriage license," he spoke enunciating his words apparently with the greatest difficulty. "I would love to—go out—as your husband, Anne. Would you—do that for me?"

She glanced at him wonderingly.

"How could we do that?" she asked.

Here the artful Bunch, who had followed, edged himself into the conversation explaining that Ishmael was a great man among the Armenian immigrants; he was their magistrate, their doctor, their minister of God as well as their court interpreter—the wisest man in the quarter. He could perform a legal marriage.

The proposal took Anne completely by surprise. Nothing had been further from her thoughts. Yet Clarence was a convincing spectacle. In his bandages, which enveloped not only his face, but his form, in his writhings and contortions and groanings he was a distressful object. He was acting his part amazingly well. He seemed genuinely at the point of death.

Anne's native compassion for suffering, her yearning desire to help all hurt things prompted her to agree. It took her only a moment to decide.

"I promised to marry you," she said, "and I will."

Bunch gave a sigh of relief inaudible but profound. After all his struggles finally triumph was now within reach. Ishmael raised his eyes piously to the ceiling then went for his book. Meanwhile Anne took Clarence's hand in her own and stood waiting while Bunch huddled unexpectantly in the offing.

With pompous appreciativeness of his importance in this death-bed drama, Ishmael stood before them and slowly opened the book. He had opened his mouth to utter the first word of his civil service when Clarence gave a loud and pathetic moan. Ishmael closed the book.

"The boy's pain is too great," he muttered. "I shall ease it for him."

"What for?" demanded Bunch, who considered that this was carrying realism too far. Too many things had already gone wrong in this plot. Now that they were at the marriage he wanted to get through with it. But the shocked glance that Anne gave him made him remember his part and he covered himself by lamely adding, "We might be too late for the poor fellow."

Ishmael shuffled over to his medicine closet and poured out a draft of liquid which he carried carefully to the bed.

"Will you hold up his head and let him swallow this?" he asked Bunch.

Anne stepped to one side as Bunch complied. As his head passed close to Ishmael's he cursed him in a savage whisper, but he was too clever to allow his resentment to show to Anne. He put his arms under Clarence and carefully lifted him so that he could swallow the medicine.

At the same moment Ishmael dropped the glass, swung his arm forward and struck Bunch a terrific blow on the nose. Anne gasped and Clarence yowled and Bunch fell back in a heap at the unexpected onslaught. But Ishmael had miscalculated the force of his blow. He had expected to knock Bunch senseless. Instead he merely enraged him.

"What in hell do you mean? Have you gone crazy?" screamed Bunch as he leaped back to his feet and charged the old man.

"Now!" howled the old man. "Now! Now! Now!"

With a crash the closet door was hurled back and Archie Middleton leaped out.

(To be concluded)

Now—don't you want to know just what happened to Archie? All cleared up next week!

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THIS five-part mystery serial begins in next week's MIDNIGHT. It is a gripping story about a young man who is willing to sell his soul to the devil for the price of a square meal. How he did it, why he did it, and what happened makes one of the greatest mystery stories we have read for many a day. Begin it in next week's MIDNIGHT.

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These and other big outstanding features that have made the magazine an almost instantaneous success, will appear in

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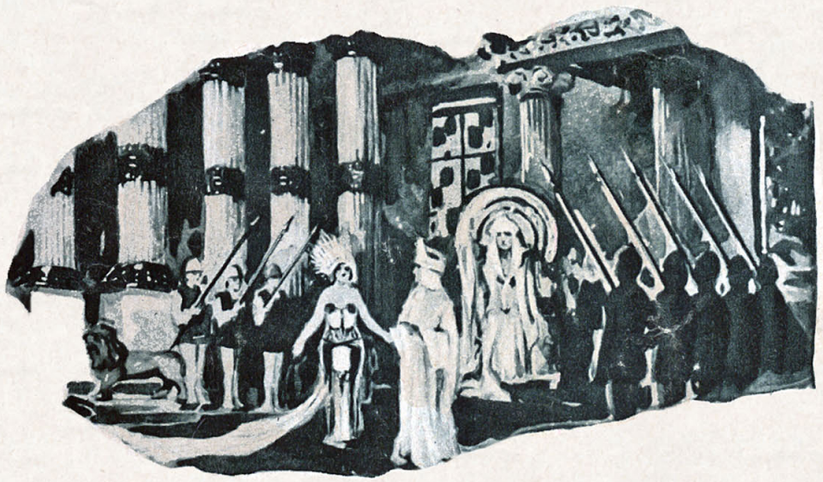
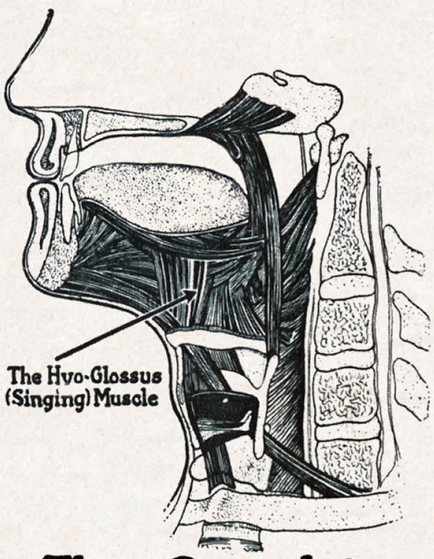
The Secret of Caruso's Greatness





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